

THE EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST

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THE EASTERN ANTHROPOLOGIST

(A Quarterly Record of Ethnography and Folk Culture)

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Notice To Contributors To The Eastern Anthropologist

The Eastern Anthropologist is a quarterly Journal published from Lucknow.

Each number of the Journal will include (1) Original Articles, (2) Notes and comments including the announcements and reports of the proceedings of the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, (3) Brief Communications, including short original notes and correspondence, (4) Research News and Views and (5) Reviews of Recent Books.

All communications printed in the Eastern Anthropologist are signed or initialed by their authors. The Council of the Society desires it to be understood that in giving publicity to them it accepts no responsibility for the statements and opinions expressed by them.

Contributors are requested to send their manuscripts clearly typed on one side of the paper, giving accurate references of literature they cite. Books for review, and reprints of papers for notice in the 'Research News and Views' section, as well as original articles and notes should be sent to :

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

With the present issue (a double number) we complete the sixth volume of the Eastern Anthropologist. We had several difficulties to overcome, including the absence from India, for a whole academic session, of the editor of the Journal. It may be remembered that the latter had gone to the United States, to take up an appointment as Visiting Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University, Ithaca. He returned in May, 1953. We hope that from now it will be possible for us to keep to our schedule. We apologise to all our subscribers for the delay and solicit their continued patronage.

* * * *

Our Assistant Secretary, Mr. Kripa Shankar Mathur is proceeding to Australia to do further research under Dr. S. F. Nadel. Mr. Mathur has been awarded a research fellowship by the Australian National University, for two years at the first instance. We hope the training that he will receive under Dr. Nadel, will equip him for more useful work on his return. A new post of lecturer in General Anthropology has been advertised by the Department and Mr. Mathur's vacancy will be filled up in due course. We are expecting addition of a senior post, that of a Reader to the staff of the Department. The State Government has been approached with the demand and we hope this will be conceded soon. Prof. M. E. Topley from Cornell University, U.S.A. will join the Department of Anthropology at Lucknow as a Visiting Professor from the beginning of the second term. Two Fulbright students from the States, Arthur Liehoff and Edward Eames have joined the Department of Anthropology at Lucknow, as research students. They will work in the neighbouring villages of Lucknow and study rural patterns in the State.

The Department of Anthropology at Lucknow, had to admit this year a larger number of students than it had done so far, both in the post-graduate and in under-graduate classes. We had 30 students in the Post-graduate classes last session. We have 45 students this year. In the B.A. classes (previous and final) we had admitted 170 students last year, but this year the admissions have exceeded 225. In the Honours sections and in research classes, we have 20 students this year. Besides, students who have offered

anthropology as a degree subject, there are students of Economic and Sociology, who also read a few papers on cultural anthropology. As a result, our M.A. classes have become too large.

We are happy to announce that one of the affiliated women colleges, viz., the Mahila Vidyalaya College, Lucknow, has started a Department of Anthropology and are offering anthropology, at the B.A. stage. This is the first occasion for a women's college in India, to initiate anthropological studies. We congratulate Dr. (Miss) K. Sabarwal, Principal of the College and its Managing Committee for this timely recognition of anthropology. Miss Anima Mukerji, one of our Assistant secretaries, has joined the Department and is teaching in the College.

* * * *

We learn that Dr. B. S. Guha, the present director of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, has reached the age of superannuation and is retiring from service this year. His position has been advertised. We have not agreed with him on many matters, particularly on the organisation of the Department and its activities, but we shall fail in our duty, if we do not mention of the service he has rendered to the cause of anthropological research in India. The organisation of the Department took most of his time and it is natural that he could not actively participate in any major research, but he has put the Department of Anthropology of the Government on a safe basis, for which he had to work very hard. We know how difficult it is to convince our people of the importance and scope of anthropological research and to popularise the applied role of anthropology. We do not know if he has succeeded in doing so, but that he had to do much uphill work, we have to admit. We have some experience of initiating anthropological studies in this part of the country and we can appreciate the difficulties that are met by any one who undertakes such tasks. We therefore commend the work that has been done by Dr. Guha and hope that his retirement will enable him to devote more time and efforts to further the cause of anthropological research in India.

* * * *

Incidentally we would like to mention about the recent publications of the Department of Anthropology. We have received some bulletins which contain several articles by the officers of the Anthropology Department, past and present. Most of these articles appear sketchy, ill-informed and ill-digested. The bibliography and references in the articles, are, most inadequate and one finds indirect

NOTES AND COMMENTS

and veiled personal attacks. Some of these articles were meant for popular journals, and some were written by the authors even before they joined the department. In an article on 'Blood Groups' we were surprised to find some data quoted by the author from an article published several years ago, but it appears that the person concerned did not read later articles by the same author, where the data were revised and reinterpreted. It reminds us of an incident that occurred in the course of an address by a prominent anthropologist in an American University last year. The celebrated anthropologist was addressing a group of anthropologists and after the address, one member of the audience got up and referred to the views of the learned anthropologist, on 'culture'. This authority once defined culture as 'super-organic' and that was the charge levelled against him. The learned speaker looked round him and found that the audience was anxious to have his reaction. He silently stood up and enquired of the questioner, 'when did I write it?' The answer was 'twenty years ago.' He smiled and repeated the answer, 'twenty years ago, oh!' and sat down.

We were also not happy to see some semi-nude pictures of Vertier Elwin (formerly Rev. Father Elwin) reprinted in the Bulletin. We had elsewhere commented on these pictures as we did not think that scientific publications require to serve nude and semi-nude pictures either for pictorial effect or for boosting their sale. These are done by illustrated journals which are meant for the uninitiated.

* * * * *

We are sorry to find Father Elwin (now Dr. Elwin) using the columns of the illustrated Weekly of Bombay to record his sermon on Indian anthropology and his partisan views on the work of his Indian colleagues. In a recent review of one of the publications of the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Elwin could not find fault either with the contents of the book or its production, but he indulged in dirty mudslinging against the Society which sponsored and financed the publication advising the author not to keep such bad company that of the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society. We did not take the libel to the court, in spite of provocation.

We note, however, his anger but do not want to imitate his methods.

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THE SINHALESE FAMILY SYSTEM

BRYCE RYAN

Culturally, although not politically, Ceylon fits within the vast Indian mosaic. The diversity of Indian influences upon the island, as well as local adaptations and autonomous growth, have, however, brought forth distinctive institutions. This sub-cultural autonomy is exhibited much more by the Sinhalese than by the Jaffna Tamils. Within the Sinhalese regions of Ceylon, however, the structure of familial institutions is surprisingly uniform. Variations exist, as the legally recognized ones between the Low Country and Kandyan Provinces, and the more subtle ones between Kandyan Highlands and Kandyan dry-zone, but these appear to be variations from what may well have been a common historical pattern.¹ Within any given region and under conditions of equal accessibility to the outside world, intraregional differences are probably slight. Thus social cleavages, as those of caste and other differentiating factors, are not reflected in significant differences in family and marriage customs and relationships except insofar as these are the direct product of greater or less financial power, or caste-linked vocations.

The Nuclear Family as the Basic Unit

The basic structural unit in all Sinhalese family organization is the nuclear household centering upon one husband and his wife. While

1. Low Country Sinhalese are subject to Roman-Dutch Law whereas Kandyan, i.e. Sinhalese having Kandyan descent, are subject to modified traditional law. (A uniform system of criminal law prevails.) Hayley is of the opinion that the distinction in legal systems blurs the earlier homogeneity of Sinhalese legal and customary norms. See F. A. Hayley, *The Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese or Kandyan Law* (Colombo, 1923) Introduction. It should be understood that the present paper does not purport to adequacy in reference to family law. General observations are based largely upon nearly four years of study of village social organization, particularly in selected villages in each of the major socio-cultural regions of the island. Several of these have been given further description in the writer's "The Ceylonese Village and The New Value System", *Rural Sociology*, March, 1952. For a summary background of Ceylon's regions, see also "Socio-Cultural Regions of Ceylon", *ibid*, March, 1950. Quantitative statements made here are based upon surveys covering all households in an isolated Northwestern Province jungle village of 57 households and an accessible Kandyan highland village of 86 households, and a 25 per cent sample of a Low Country village about 35 miles from Colombo, having 400 households. Most of the research utilized here was possible through the field assistance of students of sociology at the University of Ceylon and the support of the University of Ceylon and the Division of Medicine and Public Health, Rockefeller Foundation. I am also indebted to Professor Morris E. Opler and Mr. H. W. Tambiah for their comments. However the writer is solely responsible for views expressed herein.

this marital couple, with their children, is complexly integrated with lineal blood groupings, and particularly with the loosely defined and frequently bilateral, local kindred, it stands as the primary production and consumption unit. Only when the nuclear family acts in its capacity as a haven for the elders, or for recently married children not yet established in their own homes, is the nuclear principle systematically compromised. Thus in a Low Country village given intensive study, three-fourths of all households have in them one marital couple, although a fifth of these have dependent single relatives also residing in them. Most of that minority of households (one-fourth) not centered upon one married couple were in fact not marital households at all being composed of "broken families" or other non-marital units. Less than 10 per cent of households having any marital pair held more than one. Dual households were usually composed either of the active married son and his aged parents, or were temporary situations in which a recently married son had not yet set out on his own. Frequently there was no common hearth especially where persons of each generation were solvent and able bodied.

The conditions described above are neither regionally limited nor atypical. (A jungle village studied had only one dual household but a fifth of the nuclear families had single dependents living with them.) Occasionally one finds a single house divided between related nuclear families living as distinct economic units, but this is no institutionalized pattern. Nor does the married child build his home within a parental compound although settlement is often close by on parental land. The important institutionalized deviation from nuclear household independence arises in respect to aged, and especially widowed, parents, usually on the male side.

Consanguinal and Affinal Relationships

The fact that the nuclear family stands alone physically, and in most senses is the primary social unit, does not mean that affective and dependency ties with the kin are non-existent or even trivial. The very formation of the marital household is a responsibility of lineal relatives and if consanguinal and affinal bonds seem to mean little in daily affairs, they rise to the surface in time of crisis and rites of passage.

All Sinhalese belong to a caste, and most belong to a \bar{G}_e (House) within caste, and less frequently to a multi- \bar{G}_e sub-caste,

where these are recognized.² All belong also to their immediate family line within *Ge* which bears no distinctive name. (In some instances it is likely that certain *Ge* can also be looked upon as true lineages.) The number of Sinhalese *Ge* is unknown, but certainly there are several hundred within the dominant caste alone; frequently a score, and sometimes several score, *Ge* names are to be found within a single village. Within a single *Ge* may be found multitudes of individuals having no knowledge of each other and little interest in the fact of common name. None the less, the *Ge* name carries connotations of lineal status within caste, and also offers a weak basis for local loyalties and interaction. Even where status gradations are evident, the *Ge* boundary is insignificant in most daily affairs. It is a consideration in the selection of a marriage partner, although one which may often be overcome by such considerations as dowry, and it yields a rather mild sort of snobbery on occasion.

In respect to descent reckoning and succession, Sinhalese marriages may be either patrilineal and patrilocal (*diga*) or matrilineal and matrilocal (*binna*). The *diga* marriage is much more common and hence descent is usually reckoned through the father's line. (In *diga* the children take the *Ge* name of their father while in *binna*, they take that of their mother.) Regarding inheritance, Hayley has described as a cardinal point of Sinhalese rules, the equality of division among children, although the parental home usually goes to a son. In Kandyan law a *diga* married daughter may receive her equitable share in the father's estate in the form of dowry. *Binna* marriages usually arise when there is no male heir. The *binna* married Kandyan husband acquires no permanent claim upon his wife's property, the issue of the marriage succeeding to their maternal grandfather's estate. These observations imply no legal interest in the estate on the part of heirs prior to the death of the owner, who may dispose of it as he sees fit.³ Patri- and matri-localism relate generally to settlement in the parental village. Com-

2. See the writer's *Caste in Modern Ceylon: The Sinhalese System in Transition*, Rutgers University Press, 1953.

3. See Hayley, *op cit*, p. 170. This, of course, renders the *diga* dowry very important for the newly married couple. Obviously no adequate summary of the law is intended here and no attempt is essayed at distinguished General from Kandyan marriages and the varying laws of property at the present time. The concepts of *diga* and *binna* are, legally applicable only in Kandyan marriages.

monly the couple settles on parental land especially in *binna* unions where this is an essential under Kandyan law.

Even in villages composed of a single caste, it is rare and possibly unknown, that there is a single *Ge* represented. In our jungle village of less than sixty households, four *Ge* are to be found. In the large Low Country community there are more than 75 represented by household heads. As might be supposed with the common practices of localism in settlement, concentrations in neighbourhoods by *Ge* and by lineage tend to occur. In the Low Country village it was found that 77 per cent of the household heads had living brothers within the village and over half had one or more in the same immediate neighbourhood.⁴ Less frequently do wives have adjacent siblings.

The fact that two-thirds of the young children have more contact with paternal than maternal relatives mainly reflects the frequency with which wives marry from outside. (In some instances relatives nominally in the male line will also be maternal kin through the complexities of generations of marriage preference for family lines previously united in marriage.) It is significant, however, that even one-third of the children had as close or closer contact with their mother's people. Partly this is due to instances of matrilocal settlement but mainly to permissive village endogamy. The point, however, is clear. The married couple and their children are surrounded by kin of various degrees and types of affiliation and the important social group of *neighbourhood* tends to become a group of complexly related kin.

In this environment the social relationships between kinsfolk have not been highly institutionalized. Miscellaneous kinsmen along with wholly unrelated neighbours form the individual's immediate intimate world outside the home. Quite minor differentiation exists between kin and non-kin in the normal affairs of everyday life. Economic activities, as well as those multifarious dependencies upon others in house building, crop harvesting, almsgiving and exorcising ceremonies are affairs of neighbours before they are affairs of kin. In only one type of land tenure is the cultivator virtually forced into collaboration with his related peers and perhaps other kinsmen. This tenure (*tattumaru*) is an exception to the general rule of individual proprietorship, and in some instances service tenure, and arises when

4. See the writer's "Primary and Secondary Contacts in a Ceylonese Peasant Community", *Rural Sociology*, December, 1952.

shares in unpartitioned land are inherited by several relatives, often brothers. Even here the integrity of the nuclear unit is not compromised, since the system involves rotation in operation by the respective share holders. In our Low Country village less than a third of the families owning any land, owned some land in *tattumāru* and it might be hazarded that such joint ownership is more significant as a source of tension than as a basis of solidarity.

To be sure, the bonds of blood between related peers, usually have some affective significance and often behavioral as well. These are rarely institutionalized through carefully defined reciprocities. At household ceremonies one expects greater loyalty from kinsmen than neighbours; more accurately, their absence is more sharply noted. The failure of a neighbour to come to a funeral, or in time of grave illness, will be taken into some account, but for a kinsman-neighbour to be absent may be reason for enduring coolness between the households. In certain rites of passage special functions are assigned special kinsmen, but these usually involve lineal rather than peer relationships. Affectional sibling ties are apparent even when they involved married siblings living in different villages for, unless estranged, visiting back and forth persists throughout life. This is especially true for sister-sister relationships, although in the Low Country village 86 percent of the men had visited with brothers in nearby villages during the year and nearly as many had visited sisters. Such visits have more to do with the re-affirmation of subjective unity than with achieving specific ends or joint action. The frequency with which one finds close relatives "falling out" with each other over jealousies, land disputes and hurt feelings, would be surprising to one who accepted the *Gemeinschaft* or *folk* concepts at face value.

Marriages are the outstanding events in which related nuclear families of common lineage have serious interest. Since a marriage always involves a crisis for blood prestige, all first degree and even remoter kin are closely concerned, although spouse selection itself is usually a parental responsibility. In exercising it the parents act as the surrogate of the consanguinal group of the *diga* father or the *binna* mother. Theoretically at least lineages are cemented together in marriage and the boundaries of kinship reciprocities extended, or reinforced. Actually the unification of affinally related households is more latent than overt, in spite of the fact that in selecting a spouse account is taken of the number of able bodied males brought into the kindred. It is much less that lineages are joined than that the

wife is bonded to another line.⁵ In *dīgā* she has joined and identified her interests with a new consanguinal group. But while this observation bears some legal support, it has also qualifications: daughters are not simply dropped under Kandyan law or in general practice. Under Kandyan law a destitute *dīgā* married daughter is entitled to maintenance out of the parental estate.⁶ Rarely is there any feeling that the bride's people should watch over her in the new union, nor is she encouraged to run to them with her troubles or even in instances of serious trouble, to return to the parental home. Certain ties are however maintained by the wife and extended to the husband. For the birth of her child, especially the first, the daughter by custom goes to her parents. (This practice is widely qualified particularly by the growing popularity of maternity hospitals.) On Sinhalese New Year it would be a rude couple which did not pay their respects to the wife's as well as the husband's parents and to her more important second degree elders. The wife maintains home ties through visiting, often in the company of her children, and less frequently with the husband, too. In terms of economic interdependency created through marriage the reciprocities are usually latent unless all are on terms of neighbourliness. The affinal kin might be utilized in critical events such as the need for a loan, or finding a marriage partner for a child, or locating a job for a son. Connections are handy to have and their existence is psychologically important although their utilization is irregular and loosely defined.

Intergenerationally the lineal family has more institutionalized relationships than those binding the consanguine kin of one generation, or affinally related peer households. To whichever lineal group the nuclear family is affiliated, the bonds between ascendants and descendants are subjectively and behaviourally significant. Central to this is the concept of family honour which falls heavily upon each son. Goodness of family "name" is quite a different matter from goodness of *Ge* name. The latter is ancient and no more mutable than is caste itself. Family line position, qualified mainly by caste and slightly by *Ge*, is a product of the works of the lineage's nuclea

5. This would not be true for some lineages where intermarriage has been practiced for generations and the lines are intimately interwoven socially. This is especially the case for aristocratic Kandyan *Ge* which are also lineages in which together form a sub-caste.

6. Hayley, *op. cit.*, p. 388. Furthermore movable property received by wife as dowry, gift or inheritance, from her parents or brothers reverts to them if they survive her. *Ibid.*, p. 474.

households. A son, acting in role of father, is expected to make its honour paramount in arranging his child's match, or in promoting a child's education or watching over his, in this instance her, moral reputation. And in the death of the father, sons unquestionably accept his undischarged obligation towards unmarried sisters.

The fact that most deviations from the simple nuclear household involve an aged parent, or parents, of the male, does not indicate joint familism, but it does demonstrate continued responsibility of a son to his elders, and their responsibility toward the newly married son. Care of the parents is steeped in ideas of family honour and for all its independence the nuclear household is the repository of this honour.

Marriage

In a society valuing the integrity of blood, and requiring home-pun social and economic security systems, the attention of kin to the marriage match safeguards personal status, and security as well as the more intangible quality of family good name. Serious departure from the definition of a "good marriage" effects parental and sibling households on both sides far more than would any instance of individual misbehaviour. It may be hazarded that the father, especially of a girl, attends more to the family and personal prestige of a prospective in-law than to his economic position. There is, of course, some positive association between these factors.

The core of regular, traditional Kandyan marriage, and no doubt Low Country as well, has been expressed by Sawers as:⁷ The consent of the respective Heads of the families; the countenance and sanction of the Relations to the third or fourth degree on both sides, to the union of the parties, that they must be of the same Caste, and of equal family, respectability and rank, which is chiefly ascertained by the families having previously intermarried—and when this has not been the case, they are particularly scrupulous—and affluence and prosperity for the time being, on one side, will hardly endure an ancient family to deviate from this rule. . . ." While the elements of this statement have not today the legal sanction of former times, each of them with qualification is essential in practice. Under modern conditions third or fourth degree relatives have little voice in matches, the primary responsibility lying with parents. And, while caste endogamy is rigidly demanded, a dowry-hungry

7. Quoted in John D'Oyly, *A Sketch of the Kandyan Constitution*, (Colombo 1929) p. 127.

father, or one thirsting for the achieved prestige of a government servant, may permit a match which crosses the bounds of family, *Ġē* or even sub-caste status. Hypergamy especially is fairly common within caste. These practices, of course, give rise to situations in which the kin on one side may preen themselves over a good match while those on the other gossip caustically at their bemeanment. In some instances lasting alienations may occur.

The criteria of a good match are many and they vary from those which are fixed and absolute to others which are variable in that an individual's strengths in some may balance weaknesses in others. Rigid requirements are : membership in the same caste, the bride more youthful than the groom, a virginal bride, and close matching of horoscopes.⁸ Of these, perhaps the requirement of caste is most serious, but all are widely maintained, even in the cities. (Needless to say, none of these conditions is recognized in any modern legal code.) Beyond these rigid factors a wealth of criteria become relevant. On the side of the girl, her dowry, her recognized housewifely abilities, her light complexion and beauty, are significant attributes. For the boy, occupational prestige, wealth, and sobriety are important. For both, *Ġē* and particularly lineage prestige are taken into close account, although in modern times these are frequently counter-balanced by such factors as dowry or achieved position. There is nothing which can balance discrepancy in age requirements or in caste.

In addition to these factors, there are preferences in mating, the chief one being in reference to marriage between relatives not of prohibited degree. More precisely there is a traditional preference for cross cousins, especially in the union of a man with his mother's brother's daughter. Deviation from this custom is not viewed seriously. The practice, however, is of some economic significance in that it tends to hold descending dowry and other property within defined familistic limits. There is no evidence of either village or *Ġē* exogamy among the Sinhalese, although in some localities it is considered a trifle "cheap" to find a bride within one's village : elsewhere it is viewed as snobbish to go outside. Parallel cousins and

8. According to Robert Knox, *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, (London 1681) virginity may not always have been so highly regarded. There is some evidence that this is the case today in remote areas. Normally, however, in villages, the examination of the nuptial cloth is a going practice, and parents take great caution to prevent untoward rumours regarding their unmarried daughters.

those standing in known and similarly incestual classificatory relationship are forbidden.⁹ Violations of this principle are rare.

Historically the Sinhalese probably have practiced both polyandry and polygyny, but in modern times both of these forms are illegal and uncommon.¹⁰ None-the-less instances of locally recognized polyandrous marriages are not difficult to find if one wishes to search them out. In my judgement polygynous unions are rare, although the sociological distinction between those and mistress keeping is a rather difficult one to fix. The several instances of polyandry observed, have been, as in tradition, fraternal, with no attempt being made to assign paternity to either "Big Father" or to "Little Father."¹¹

These generalized observations are given more meaning, and considerable qualifications, by recourse to the actual state of affairs in selected villages. The following discussion describes for three regionally distinct villages, the extent of parental arrangement in marriage, dowry practices, and localism and kinship selectivity in mates.¹² (Some brief impressions on urban marriage will be given subsequently.) In each locality it should be understood that all marriages are within the same caste, and we may be reasonably sure, that practically all have been proved astrologically auspicious. The attitude toward virginity varies slightly, but in any case we can probably assume that the great majority of all girls at first marriage were virginal. In at least two of the localities there are known tensions created through marriages which kinsmen have considered beneath family dignity. In each Kandyan village, particularly the more remote one, a number of marriages have not been legalized.

Given the proper context, it is not unusual to hear youth speak longingly of romantic marriage. Less frequently is any serious consideration given this and when they get down to the serious business of marrying, few even consider the possibility of a mate who fails to

9. For an outline of the kinship system see Hayley, *op cit*, Part IV. Note that no mention is made here of the positive or negative legal requirements in marriage. We are concerned with folk practice rather than legal boundaries, and principles.

10. That polyandry was traditionally accepted and common is unquestionable. Knox, *op. cit.* states flatly that polygny did not occur but John D'Oly, *A Sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyan Kingdom*, Colombo, 1929, especially p. 129, provides evidence of its acceptance and practice.

11. Although now outmoded this had legal precedence under Kandyan law, see Hayley, *op cit*, p. 172.

12. See footnote 1 above.

conform to traditional specifications. Usually when strong objections are voiced by the parties to an arranged match conscientious hearing is given by the parents and frequently the search for a mate is turned elsewhere. In the three villages from 68 to 80 per cent of all existing marriages were made purely through parental arrangement. There is no indication that these differences between bear any significance or reflect different degrees of urbanization. Of marriages made through means other than pure arrangement the vast majority were instigated by the partners, but with full approval by the parents. Parental arrangement is the rule even in the remote jungle village where is practised the delay of legal and ceremonial consumation of marriage until after the birth of the first child.

In the highland and jungle localities, spouses are usually blood relatives. This is especially true in the latter where nearly three-fourths of the 42 married couples profess blood kinship. In the Low Country, only one-fourth were kin. In part these differences should be interpreted as a dwindling significance of cross cousin preference; mainly they signify the declining significance of the general test of "previous alliance" as the measure of status suitability. A small proportion of the related spouses are in fact first degree cousins, most are distantly connected but in no known degree permitting application of kinship terms of the sister-brother, mother-son orders, e.g. parallel cousin, father's sister. Common *Ge* membership is of no account positively or negatively. In the small, immobile and closely knit jungle community, nearly a third of the marriages were within *Ge* lines. Elsewhere the proportions are much smaller, but it is relevant that the number of different *Ge* available for marriage are notably greater. The fact of name identity has no significance except as it may happen to influence the boundaries of incest and preferential relationships.

As has been observed, the Sinhalese have no strong feelings towards marriage of persons born and bred within the same village. This is evident in the fact that of existing marriages in the three villages from 70 per cent to 89 per cent of the husbands had been born in the village and from 39 to 53 per cent of the wives. (The greatest localism was found in the jungle and the least in the Low Country.) Although the figures are influenced by the presence in each locality of matrilocal and patrilocal unions, this accounts for a small share of the apparent immobility. In the jungle 43 per cent of the marital pairs had been born and reared within the same village. When

spouses come from outside the village, distances are rarely great. It is probable that analysis would show persistent marrying patterns between selected nearby villages. Seldom is a spouse sought from a distance of over ten miles even in areas of easy transportation. While this localism is a phase of the preference of kin in marriage, it is preserved in the unions of non-kin as well. Since the professional marriage broker is less commonly used than is some nearby informed uncle or brother, knowledge of available spouses is hence local knowledge. (Quite possibly among the well-to-do who patronize a professional match-maker, distances are greater.) Where contemplated spouses are from a considerable distance, great skepticism is shown. Preferably matches are made within an area in which one may possess direct and personal knowledge of the antecedents of the proposed party. Where a match with a distant partner is seriously proposed, it is not uncommon for an emissary to spend several days at the distant spot to seek out all that may be learned as to family reputation and standing . . . and whether or not economic status or dowry pretensions are as claimed. From time to time fearful stories are heard in which rogues of low caste but good presence have through distance and unfamiliarity passed themselves into unsuspecting but careless "good" families.

Matrilocal marriages are to be found in each locality but are especially common in Kandyan areas where the *binna* union is recognised. Eleven of the 74 unions in the highland village were *binna* and about the same proportion in the jungle. Such marriages are held in low esteem, for it is felt that a man can scarcely be a man under their conditions. The Sinhalese proverb pointedly comments that "the *binna* husband should take care to have ready at the door of his wife's room, a walking stick, a talipot, and a torch."

It would be unthinkable in any Sinhalese village that a wife might be of the same or of more advanced age than her husband. This attitude is readily rationalized by the views that paternalistic authority is transferred to the husband and that a younger husband could not command the respect of his wife, i.e., as an elder. In official Sinhalese statistics the age difference is generally about seven years; this is also the case in the villages under observation. Ages at marriage are lower among Kandyans than Low Country Sinhalese, and in very remote areas it is not unknown for brides barely to have reached puberty. In our Low Country village the median age at marriage for men is 28, about the same as the mean

for the region. In the highland village the corresponding figure is 25, and in the jungle, 23. Similarly for women we range from the median age of 16 in the jungle village to 22 in the Low Country. It is significant that when queries are made as to the ideal age at marriage, responses correlate closely with the actual.

For a people who have long cherished the dowry system, and for whom it fits so aptly as a technique of inheritance at a crucial time, it is surprising that such large proportions of village marriages appear to be undowered. In the Low Country community, 28 per cent of the unions were initiated without dowry and in the Highlands, over one-half. Generally speaking the dowry is an institution of the well-to-do. The jungle village is a case apart, and the generality of its practices have not been ascertained. Here no dowry is given, the *diga* married daughter sharing in her father's estate upon his death, or sometimes upon the birth of the first child, a custom less frequently followed in the Highlands.

The responsibility for raising dowry lies solely with parents of the bride, if they are living. As property, the dowry has differing significance in Kandyan areas from the Low Country. Thus in our Low Country village it is paid directly, and ostentatiously, to the groom, while in the Kandyan area it is given to and remains the property of the bride.¹³ Its value is highly variable. In our Low Country village in which its provisions seems to cut further into the low economic levels, the mean value was Rs. 220 while in the Highland village, it was about Rs. 500. Although land is highly prized in dowries, it is also prized by lineages and is less frequently given than is money and movables. There is evidence that the value of dowries is rising, but, in the villages, this is probably no more rapid than rising money income.

Rigidity of the Marital Union

In its historical background, the Sinhalese marital family was not only flexible in numbers of spouses, it was characterized by great inrigidity and no great value upon permanence or even exclusiveness in the marriage union. While Robert Knox, the 17th century captive of the Kandyans, had a nice eye for that which would attract

13. "The legal unity of husband and wife under English law or the community of property under Dutch law, finds no place whatever in the Sinhalese system. Presents made to the wife on marriage by way of dowry, and property acquired in any way after marriage, belong to her absolutely and may be removed upon dissolution of the union." Hayley, *op cit*, p. 285.

the licentious interest of Puritan England, his remarks are probably accurate.¹⁴

"But their Marriages are but of little force of validity. For if they disagree and dislike one the other; they part without disgrace. Yet it stands firmer for the Man than for the Woman; howbeit they do leave one the other at their pleasure. They do give according to their Ability a Portion of Cattle, Slaves and Money with their Daughters; but if they chance to mislike one another and part asunder, this Portion must be returned again, and then she is fit for another Man, being as they account never the worse for wearing.

Both Women and Men do commonly wed four or five times before they can settle themselves to their contentation. And if they have Children when they part, the Common Law is, the Males for the Man, and the Females for the Woman. . . ."

And in reference to their disregard for sexual property rights, he notes that

"Young people lie at one another houses, . . . So that youth are bred up to Whoredom. . . . Indeed the Publick Trade would be bad, and hardly maintain them that exercised it, the private one being so great . . . In these affairs the Women are very expert (it being their continual practice) to keep their design from the Husbands knowledge; tho by his own Experience he cannot be ignorant of Womens devices. . . ."

In modern Kandyan law, divorce is today much more easily achieved than in the Low Country, and undoubtedly fewer marriages are ever legally registered. Among registered unions, divorce rates are relatively high. Further, it is likely that the laxity in sex norms are much more conventionalized in Kandyan, and especially in remote areas, than is the case in the rural Low Country. Since marriage is more frequently unformalized, there is perhaps also more trifling with that fine dividing line between marital and pre-marital sex relations. These regional differences are the mixed result of longer exposure to non-traditional influences in the Low Country, and especially the application of non-traditional law of marriage and property. The very recognition of the wife's own property in marriage was excellently adapted to a society in which brittle and successive unions were normative. It may strike some as paradoxical, however, that westernizing influences seem to have moved

14. *Op cit*, pp. 146-149, in the edition of 1911, James McLehose and Sons, Glasgow, John Ryan, editor.

nuclear family organization towards greater stability and more rigid observance of traditional norms in regard to sexual property, without in the same process much disturbing the significance of lineal groups. The nuclear family was not enhanced as a functioning unit, it was rigidified and stabilized.

This process is, I believe, reflected in comparative observations in the three villages (and is supported by other observations not presented here). In the remote area, the fact that marriages are usually legalized after the birth of child, if at all, at which time or thereafter, dowry or the wife's inheritance is brought into the union, is significant. Husbands have ways of dissipating wives' property and these parents want to be sure that the union is likely to be of long duration. Although the bride's virginity is valued everywhere, my not well supported belief is that the attitude is laxer in the jungle. (It is at least easier *to learn of* forced marriages to save a girl's honour, and of instances of abortion and infanticide.) It is safe to say that adultery is more conventionalized, probably more general, and certainly treated with less of a typically Anglo-American air of scandalized hypocrisy. The more remote the community, the more willing are men to tell of the technique of conquest and to marvel over the seductive accomplishments of respectable housewives. In one area a woman's song dwells on the joy of intercourse with a lover and the boredom suffered with a husband, a ditty that would surely shock the Low Country cultivator's wife and probably some husbands.¹⁵ Everywhere, however, there is both theoretical and actual regard paid to the conformity of caste, howsoever illicit may be the affair. This precept has of course much less applicability to men than to women.

Although my data on successions of marital unions is unworthy of statistical statement, informants in jungle areas *talk* more of this than do Low Country informants. Further, the fact that ultimate registration is valued by wives points to the element of insecurity in a bride's position. The official data on legal divorce testifies fairly directly to the point when we note that in 1940-44 the annual rate for Kandyan marriages, 70.7 per thousand marriages, was eleven times that for General marriages (which exclude the still higher Muslim rate).¹⁶ For registered marriages a higher propor-

15. So firm is the legend of the insatiable wife in one isolated jungle district an informant had developed a theory of explanation in terms of the age difference between spouses.

16. The Registrar General's *Report on Vital Statistics for the Year 1946*, (Colombo, 1948).

tion of General compared to Kandyan were nominally between bachelors and spinsters (89 per cent compared to 85 per cent). The average duration of Kandyan marriages terminated by legal divorce was 3.9 years in 1946. It is reasonable that unregistered marriages are more transitory than registered and on these there are no official data.

It is a rough empirical impression that stability of marriages and regard for marital chastity increases within Kandyan regions in association with higher formal education standards and greater accessibility to the outside world. Without attempting to make paragons out of a folk who generally tolerate a fairly broad latitude in conformity with norms, interior Low Country villagers have today a strongly developed sense of permanence in marriage ties; they place an unqualified premium on female virginity (as do most highland communities), and profess, and probably practise, greater regard for marital chastity among women than is true in Kandyan regions. As in several other countries, the double standard of morality is unmistakable, throughout.

Internal Relationships in the Nuclear Family

There is a voluminous literature evidencing the lowly position of women in peasant, and particularly Asian, peasant societies. Since the Sinhalese family is avowedly patriarchal, no doubt it could be forced into conformity with such uncritical generalizations. The fallacies would be many and one of the chief ones would be the failure to distinguish woman in her distinct roles of wife and of mother. Throughout the Indian East the ideology of *mother* stands in contrast to that of *wife*; behaviour directed toward *mother* is utterly different in its status connotations than behaviour directed toward *wife*. *Mother* is elevated in theory to a realm of near-worship by beholden and adoring males; *wife* tends to be depressed toward the role of worshipful servant whose life is dedicated to the glorification and satisfaction of pre-eminent, yet responsible, males. This distinction is implicit in Buddhist philosophy. Perhaps the most amazing thing about these status ideologies is the very nearness with which practice conforms to them.

Non-demonstrative relationships in public are expected everywhere between husband and wife. An open caress or show of affection would be a gross violation of propriety. Before the world the wife shows only symbols of respect and the husband dignified distance. In language, honorifics should be used by the wife toward

the husband, less frequently is the converse followed. It is the wife who follows, on the lane and in eating. She will never sit in the presence of the husband and his friends. He sleeps on a bed, she on the mat. She gives him obeisance which he accepts as a due. Her *manner* and voice tone is submissive (except in quarrels). The symbolism of the association, and the apparent content, is indistinguishable from that of a master-servant relationship.

The servant-maid analogy gradually breaks down as we leave the realm of symbolism and the public eye. She is no lackey to work at any and all tasks which the whims of a master might assign. Usually there is an institutionalized division of labour and *also authority*. Rarely would a husband interfere in the workings of the household, and most rarely or never would one see a wife behind a plough. That women work far longer hours than men, and at exhausting labour, there is no doubt. Sinhalese men usually find time for ample veranda sitting. Women's work, in pounding rice, collecting fire wood, carrying water, grinding curry stuffs, and besides taking primary responsibility for the children, is literally, never done. In addition she is to lend a hand in many spheres nominally the husband's, as in harvesting, but it would be an assault upon male dignity for him to assist in the household labour.

The final authority on all family matters resides in the husband-father, although he usually has a fairly keen sense of minding his own business in child and home management. On matters of marriage for a child, the wife is invariably consulted, and in more modern villages on other important affairs as well, although the ultimate decision is the husband's. As has been observed, it is felt that the status of the wife's father adheres to the husband in reference to her behaviour. Time and again village women have assured us that in marriage, their own father has relinquished his responsibility and his authority over them to the groom, who in turn is to be deferred to as one defers to a father . . . as well as the way in which one defers to a husband. Wife beatings are not uncommon, especially in Kandyan and remote villages; women insist that such treatment is no adequate cause for a wife to return to her own people. The dominance of the husband and the submission of the wife is rationalized by both sexes to kammatic law. The fact that a wife was born a woman and a husband a man is *prima facie* evidence of sin and of merit in previous existences. The paradoxical attitude toward *mother* is one bred both from a literal emotional and

physical dependence and of respect for age. It has been argued elsewhere that in sex relations, male dominance is unquestioned.¹⁷

Though the husband's role is indeed patriarchal, there are many limiting and compensating mechanisms. Household affairs and rearing of children are left almost exclusively in the wife's hands, the husband interfering little so long as his comfort is assured and discipline does not get wholly out of hand. In many localities the wife is an important money earner on nearby plantations, and frequently, too, it is she who acts as the family banker. Aggression toward the wife is in no sense part of community understanding of the marital relationship. It does the husband's reputation some harm, except perhaps in the more rigorous patriarchalism of the jungle.

Probably no community on earth is without examples of hen-pecked husbands, and certainly the devices of wives for attaining power in the home are many and sometimes subtle. To this point a village woman comments that, "A woman need not be educated to know how to get on harmoniously with her husband. If she is sensible she can get around him. If she is gentle about it he will come around to her point of view." The dowry is one very important device for the preservation of a wife's personal dignity and is probably the chief means by which the girl's parents insure her status after marriage. Everywhere women realize its importance not only in reference to the husband but especially in dealing with his female relatives. It is the prized verbal weapon to throw in the face of an unappreciative husband or his jibing kinswomen. Conversely, the poorly dowered wife may find her position at times of tension almost unendurable. In its possession the wife gains psychological security, often of greater importance than the economic security which in Kandyan areas it still implies, although the Kandyan concept of personal property in marriage attests that her position has always been systematically protected.¹⁸ In an attempt to survey changing attitudes toward marriage, the question was asked of young unmarried men and adolescent boys, "Do you think dowry is a good practice." Many of the young men responded in the negative and on the surface it might be thought that such response indicates the growth of individualistic and romantic courtship values. This was indeed the significance of the negative in some instances. However,

17. See the writer's "Institutional Factors in Sinhalese Fertility", *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, October, 1952.

18. Knox *op cit*, p. 150, refers to tax exemptions allowed women but not men.

in many cases, the youth continued, as did one, "Dowry is bad because it makes women independent and snobbish."

The relationships between children and between parents and children are generally consistent with the adult role expectations.¹⁹ Different treatment of boys and of girls is essentially consistent with the dominant role to be assumed by one and the submissive role of the other. Straus has found that the conception of parenthood expressed towards both boys and girls in the Low Country village is authoritarian or traditional in contrast to developmental. None the less the rigidity of parental authority is more theoretical than actual. Children are in fact allowed great leeway in conformity with norms, and even with parental desire. Typically, the father is the final disciplinarian, although normal daily affairs are guided by the mother. Only towards infants does the father express affection overtly. Toward growing children of either sex his behaviour is aloof. The mother, on the other hand, is ever in a close and overtly affectionate relationship with them, and is as well their intermediary to the father. It may be suggested that within the home, the father stands on a pedestal built of ultimate authority, fear, and awe; the mother upon one of conscious dependence, and deep affection and intimacy.

The Urban Family

Although repeated references have been made to regional variations implying degrees of social change, practically all of these have related to rural rather than to urban conditions. To my knowledge no inductive studies in any sphere of urban family life have been made and these cursory observations are the crudest empirical generalizations.

Family organization in the city appears surprisingly similar to that of the villages. Individuation, with its correlates of romantic marriage and disregard for traditional concepts of family honour and traditional methods of its perpetuation, has not been a very evident product of urban life. The existing emphasis upon nuclear organization fits urban living and the retention of ties with the village

19. In these areas extensive and systematic research has been carried out by Murray Straus, formerly of the University of Ceylon, now at the University of Wisconsin. Straus' researches on child development and personality are in process of analysis and will almost certainly throw important lights upon Sinhalese social structure and character. Two preliminary reports have been made. See M. Straus, "Mental Ability and Cultural Needs: A Psycho-cultural Interpretation of the Intelligence Test Performance of Ceylon University Entrants," *American Sociological Review*, June, 1951, and a forthcoming paper on emotional security and child training practices, to appear in an early issue of *Social Forces*.

kin is common. Some districts of Colombo, the only sociologically urban locale, have been formed out of caste homogeneous village antedating the city. Generally, however, people do not live among a kindred in the same sense as in a village, but it may be hazarded that kinship provides a persistent basis for varieties of informal social relationships outside the household, and in crisis the claim of kinship is powerful.

Familistic marriage is rarely repudiated. Howsoever highly the sophisticated youth comes to value personal choice in mates and courtship, few indeed are willing to sacrifice the security of kin through an ill-advised marriage, i.e. ill advised in terms of traditional criteria. In the upper economic levels, it is probable that some of traditional features have been exaggerated, possibly the word is "perverted". Thus dowry instead of passing into limbo, soars to fantastic significance in some circles. The prestige of urban occupations is more closely correlated with their dowry power than with their earning power. The government clerk has been annointed with an oil of status and the priceless prestige he gains in lieu of a living is partially repaid him in dowry. This questing to find appropriate husbands who are blessed by the economically unrewarding *mana* of the government also testifies to the fullness with which familial considerations dominate marriage. By its nuclear families is a lineage known and through daughters a moneyed but indistinguished line can buy praiseworthy "connections".

No doubt every city has its Bohemian elite who repudiate the traditional standards of propriety. In Colombo such iconoclasts are surprisingly few, although there is probably a small but rising percentage of traditionally inappropriate marriages. In such instances couples must be willing to sacrifice the security afforded by kin and dowry, although, consistent with Sinhalese tolerance, the kin often relent after the accomplished fact. The greatest disregard for familistic propriety in marriage is probably to be found at the very bottom of the economic scale, where marital unions tend to become more or less regularized sex relationships. However, the reliance on and banding together of kins-people in adversity can be demonstrated.²⁰

20. See the analysis of household composition for one economic segment in "The Female Factory Worker in Colombo", by Bryce Ryan and Sylvia Fernando, *International Labour Review*, November-December, 1951.

Conclusions

Despite legal and regional variations, the family system of the Sinhalese is surprisingly homogeneous. Throughout it is characterized by an emphasis upon the nuclear family, with comparatively unformalized reciprocities and ties with related households. None the less the establishment of nuclear families through marriage is the prerogative of lineage groups represented by parents. The maintenance or increase in lineage honour, as well as the assurance of security for the aging parents, is a powerful motivating force in the selection of marriage partners for the children. Descent, reckoned usually through the paternal line but permissively through the maternal, also determines the locality in which the nuclear household settles. This, coupled with permissive village endogamy, leads the household into a community of kin, chiefly of agnates but often of cognates as well. While neighbourly relationships between related households are common minor distinction is made between kin and non-kin in most daily affairs. Institutionalization of kinship reciprocities occur mainly in reference to the parents within whose line the marital group falls. In general the nuclear family has been in the past an unstable group with considerable conventionalized laxity in the enforcement of norms. It is argued that modernizing influences have tended to stabilize and to make for greater normative rigidity in nuclear family organization.

Social relationships and roles within the household are consistent with a patriarchal and authoritarian tradition in which the woman in role of mother is elevated, while in the role of wife she is depressed. The theoretically dictatorial role of husband-father is limited by numerous legal and institutional subventions. Child rearing practices are essentially consistent with the adult roles to which children are expected to conform. Throughout familial relationships the loose structuring of the institution is evident.

In the urban environment the integrity of familial honour, reciprocal responsibilities of married children to parents and the social importance of kin within the community, do not appear to be undergoing any immediate disorganization. Nuclear families, except in the lowest economic levels, are probably more stable than was the case historically. While the familistic nature of marriage continues with strength, its conflict with new and individualistic values is obvious. The concept of lineal family honour and the continuing high valuation placed upon the parents and kin as a social

and economic security system safeguards marriage as a ceremony of families and thus protects it from disrupting ideologies. The emphasis upon the nuclear unit as the primary functioning group has, with the inherent looseness of the entire familial system, made for satisfactory adaptations without the sacrifice of basic values.

THE MATERNAL UNCLE IN SOUTH INDIA*

(Mrs.) HILDA RAJ.

Within the framework of each south Indian caste, which is an endogamous unit, the classificatory system operates by the arrangement of kindred into various categories. From the very pattern of the arrangement the members of each caste take their directives for marrying the right kind of kindred and for avoiding the relatives who come within the prohibited degrees. Cross-cousin marriage is the general rule excepting among the Syrian Christians who are prohibited from marrying near kindred by their canonical law.

The arrangement of kindred into categories including may be relatives of five or more generations, is necessary if individuals are required to observe the correct mode of behaviour towards one another. There are terms to indicate the degree or type of kinship, and the special terms of address show the sex and age of the speaker and the person addressed. Besides the recognised terms of address, the language used would indicate respect, or familiarity or intimacy just as these attitudes have been sanctioned by custom and usage.

In the complicated patterns of society, illustrated by the numerous caste groups, two distinct social systems are clearly discernible—the patrilineal-patriarchal and the matrilineal-matriarchal. The patrilineal pattern covers the larger part of the South Indian scene, kinship being reckoned bilaterally. Certain kindred on the father's side and on the mother's side have important functions. In the matrilineal pattern, the mother's line being more important, kindred traced on her side have all the social significance. In both systems training in the observance of correct behaviour including a knowledge of rights and duties, is imparted from early years, though there is no written code of conduct or any primer setting forth the prescribed and prohibited degrees of marriage.

The Mother's Brother has a significant position in both the patrilineal and matrilineal societies. His role is characterised by economic, social and ritualistic aspects. Every man is a maternal uncle, besides being other things; and his status is high for that reason in a manner a woman can never expect to be entitled to in society, whatever her status may be in the family. In the matrilineal pattern the mother's brother exercises great powers as the *Kārnavan*

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of the *taravad*. His position is one of tremendous responsibility and trust. In the patrilineal pattern the Mother's Brother has to perform duties which are of a different nature. He gives the customary gifts to newly born children of his sisters, to their daughters at reaching puberty, to nieces and nephews at the time of their marriage, according to his status and wealth, and as prescribed by convention. Socially his consent may be necessary for the marriage of his sister's daughter, if she is not to be married to his own son. He may have to perform certain ceremonies at the time his sister's daughter is getting married, or he may be marrying her himself.

When we look at the functions of the Mother's Brother in both the social systems above mentioned we realise his importance and power as an institution by himself. Within recent years the matrilineal society has been slowly changing the laws by which it had bound itself. The *Marumakkathavam* law "a body of customs and usages" has been the guiding principle of those castes in which matriarchy prevailed and still prevails in Malabar, Cochin, Travancore and South Kanara. *Aliyasantanam* is the name given to the same system in the last named place. The Maternal Uncle usually the eldest brother, as the head of the matrilineal joint family has the sole management of the family property, and handles the income accruing from it. He has to see to the education and marriage of his sisters' children and the children of his sisters' daughters, and to the maintenance of every member of *taravad* to the end of their lives. Besides being the custodian of the family property, for the control of which he is not responsible to anyone, he is also the keeper of the family treasures, heirlooms and jewellery which have been collected over many generations. He is also the keeper of those jewels and treasures that have been given as gifts to the family deity by members of the *taravad* in gratitude for benefits received. The *Karnavan* is also the family high priest, and this gives him a most important status, for he becomes thereby the spiritual head of his large family which at times may number well over a hundred.

To look more closely at his functions: when a child is born in the family house it is the Maternal Uncle, the *Karnavan* who is first informed of the fact, and it is he who sends word to the father about the birth of the child. His next duty is to make the necessary arrangements for the purification ceremonies which have to take place on the 14th or 15th day. The milk-drinking ceremony or the *palu-kudi* is held on the 28th day after birth, when the *Karnavan* takes the child on his lap, and gives it a spoon of milk to drink. At

the same time he whispers the name of the child in its ears three times, after which the rest of the family gathered around call the child by its name. The naming ceremony may in some cases be held in the sixth month when the child is first fed with rice. For the fixing of an auspicious day the astrologer is consulted. The child is bathed and adorned with gold, jewels and placed on the *Karnavan's* lap. Then he takes a little cooked rice in a folded leaf of the jack tree, and feeds the child.

Both boys and girls go through the ear-boring ceremony when the *Karnavan* gives gifts to the goldsmith who pierced their ears with a piece of gold wire. For boys the beginning of their education takes place when they are about four, and the *Karnavan* writes on the tongue of the boy with a gold coin. Correspondingly, but a little later girls have their *thalikettu* ceremony arranged by the *Karnavan*. This ceremony is conducted on a much more elaborate scale than the actual marriage itself which comes after a few years. When the "*sambandham*" marriage takes place the *Karnavan* is all important. For with him lie all the decisions regarding the choice of a husband for a niece, or of the bride for a nephew. He first consults the astrologer who studies the horoscopes of the young people and declares whether the alliance would be auspicious or not. When the date is fixed, the *Karnavan* decides as to who are to be invited to the wedding feast. If the marriage is for a boy, gifts in the nature of so many pairs of *mundus*, so much betel leaf, areca nut, and tobacco have to be decided on by the Maternal Uncle. He is the chief host when a girl is married, and the marriage takes place in the family house. When the marriage is over the young couple touch his feet with reverence before they turn to show their respect to others.

In the patrilineal society the economic aspect is not so important since the Maternal Uncle is expected to give only customary gifts to his sisters children according to his ability. Legally he may be made the guardian to a minor nephew or niece when his sister, their mother, dies, in which case he takes care of their welfare. There is no significance regarding succession or inheritance of property which is such a clearly marked feature of the matrilineal society in Malabar, Cochin, Travancore and South Kanara.

In the social and ritualistic aspects the role of the Mother's Brother assumes great significance. When children are born to the sisters he is usually posted with the news, and among some castes the birth of girls has great importance to the Maternal Uncle. When

a girl reaches puberty the Mother's Brother is informed. He and his wife, if he is married, arrive with suitable presents; and it may be the duty of his wife to bathe and decorate the girl on the day of the purification ceremonies. Then the girl may be seen by the company that has been invited for the occasion, and she may be taken out in a procession. Among the Kallars of Madura it is the Maternal Uncle who has to bear the expenses connected with the puberty ceremonies of his sister's daughter. Thereby a man may be making sure of the right to marry her to his son or to marry her himself. It would amount to a public announcement of the Maternal Uncle's claims over the girl.

The correct mate for a boy is either his Mother's Brother's daughter, or his Father's Sister's daughter. Since it happens that sometimes a man marries his sister's husband's sister the children of the man and his sister stand in double cross-relationship. When a man is not able to marry his sister's daughter to his son, either he or his son may be entitled to some kind of compensation. His consent would be required if the girl marries out of *murai* or does not conform to the convention. She is the *murai* bride or kin-bride to her Maternal Uncle's son, or her paternal aunt's son. Among the Idaiyans the bridegroom who has no natural right of kinship to the hand of the bride has to give 4 annas and betel leaf to each of the sons of the Maternal Uncle by way of compensation. As for the Maternal Uncle himself he can give a lot of trouble by withholding his consent. His consent is usually shown by his carrying the bride from her chamber to the marriage booth. Among the Goundans of Coimbatore the bride's Maternal Uncle carries her to the *nattu-kal* where seedlings of grains are raised at the village boundary. This is the official announcement of the girl's marriage.

A Pariah bride is carried by her Maternal Uncle three times round the marriage booth, and set on the *manavarai* or the seat on which she sits during the ceremonies along with the bridegroom. Among the Kaikolans, or weavers, the Maternal Uncle ties a golden band on the bride's forehead, then he carries her to the plank on which she has to sit. Only after this does the Brahmin priest light the sacred fire and begin his chanting. The Sembadavavans, or Tamil fishermen, decorate the foreheads of the bridal couple with silver or gold plates called *pattam*. The chief *pattams* are those tied by the Maternal Uncles.

Among the Mogers or fishermen of South Kanara the bridal couple sit under the pandal with their hands joined and the palms uppermost. Then the Maternal Uncle of the bride first puts some rice upon their hands, then five betel leaves, an unhusked areca nut, and lastly a lighted wick on the top. The bride and her groom slowly lower their hands and slide the articles on to the ground. Then the bride's Maternal Uncle takes her by the hand, and formally gives her to the Maternal Uncle of the bridegroom. The Jogis, Telugu mendicants, have the convention that the Maternal Uncles of the bride and bridegroom should tie a string of twisted human hair round the wrists of the two young people. The Kapiliyans, Canarese cultivators, who are settled in Madura district do not use the *thali* or marriage badge. The chief-ceremony at a marriage is called the *kai kodukku* ceremony or the hand-joining. The hands of the bride and bridegroom are covered by a cloth, and their Maternal Uncles lock the fingers of the bridal couple under the cloth.

Generally speaking Maternal Uncles figure largely during marriage ceremonies when the bridal couple touch their feet and are given gifts. The Maternal Uncles start exchanging the bridal garlands, from the bridegroom's neck to the bride's and vice versa. After that the elders assembled also take part in the changing of the garlands.

Among the Nadars of Tinnevely the Maternal Uncle, besides having to give gifts to his sister's children and taking part in the puberty ceremonies of girls, has a very significant part to play when these girls are married. When the marriage ceremonies are about to begin, and the bride and bridegroom are ready, the Maternal Uncles of the bride have their first turn of the ceremonial. While the bridegroom waits the bride has to go through a ceremony resembling the marriage ceremony with each one of her Maternal Uncles. She exchanges garland with each one of them and the ceremony is called *Maman kalippu* or getting rid of the Maternal Uncle. Only after this ceremony is the girl free of the claims of her Maternal Uncle over her.

From what has been said above with reference to the functions of the Mother's Brother his close association with his sister's children, in both the matrilineal and patrilineal patterns of society, is clearly seen. He is the nearest male relative of the mother, and her children look up to him as their guardian in one society, while in the other they are familiar with him and take liberties with him in a way they can never do with their paternal uncles.

The common word for the Maternal Uncle in South India is *Mama* or *Maman*. There is also the word in Tamil *Amman* for the Mother's Brother, own and classificatory. The Tamil term for mother is *Ammal* or *Amma*. The suffix of "n" sound at the end of the word *Amman* indicates the male gender and the term is equivalent to "male mother". Radcliffe-Brown found in South Africa *malume* or *umalume* a term used to denote the mother's brother, and he says that the word is made up of the root "ma" meaning mother and the suffix gives the male gender to the term. He gives another example from Polynesia—in the Friendly Islands the mother's brother is called by a special term *Tuasina* or simply *Fa'e tangauta* meaning male mother.

In South India, where the cross-cousin marriage is the general rule, marriage between a man and his sister's daughter appears to be an anomaly. It would seem that a man and his son, may be a classificatory son, are competing for the hand of the same girl. In this connection the Tamil term *Mappillai* assumes significance. The term is used to describe bridegroom, husband, daughter's husband, brother-in-law, younger sister's husband, wife's brother, the son of the maternal uncle, and the son of the paternal aunt. The term is interchangeable for the son-in-law and the brother-in-law, for the wife's brother and the wife's brother's son. In practice it does happen sometimes that two sisters marry, one the son of a Maternal Uncle and the other a Maternal Uncle who is young enough to be her husband. The father of the two sisters has for his sons-in-law, his wife's elder brother's son and his wife's young brother; and both of them are *Mappillai* to him.

In the marriage of cross-cousins as recognised in the classificatory system of relationship, one finds practice conforming to pattern. One also understands from the practice allowed by society that there is provision for the Maternal Uncle-niece alliance. Then it may be asked—if a girl may marry her Mother's Brother why should not a boy marry his father's sister? One objection may be raised on the ground of incompatibility in age. But the practice has been for quite young boys to be married to their cross cousins much older in age, just for conforming to the social pattern with regard to marriage. In the islands of Oceania, Rivers came across instances of a man marrying his father's sister, and he calls such an alliance anomalous. So far as south India is concerned there is reason for avoiding such an anomaly. In the patrilineal group a man's claims in marriage are restricted to the hand of his sister's daughter, maternal uncle's

daughter and paternal uncle's daughter. The tabooed kinswomen are his father's sister, his father's brother's daughter and his mother's sister. The taboos on the parallel relationship are intelligible and there is consistence in their application ; but in the cross-relationships exception has been made with regard to the father's sister who is tabooed. At least there have been no practices noticed. Was it because relatives in the patrilineal descent should be avoided for purposes of marriage ? The father's sister—is she the female edition of the father, and so not the right mate for the son ? Her opposite number, the Maternal Uncle, belongs to the mother's line ; and a girl may in spite of that fact marry him or marry his son. It happens that the Maternal Uncle is at times the husband of the father's sister whose daughter is the prescribed bride to the nephew.

Looking at the picture of the Mother's Brother in the two social systems of south India it is possible to see the structural differences which indicate two distinct lines of development. In one the taboo of incest interdicts intimacy between the Maternal Uncle and his sister's daughter ; and in the other he has a right to marry her. In the latter pattern it is possible to see the various stages in the social position of the Mother's Brother : husband of his sister's daughter ; her potential mate whose rights over her can be annulled only ceremonially ; a kinsman who has the right to give or withhold his permission to her marriage ; her potential father-in-law who can claim, compensation if his son's claim to marry her has been overlooked. Now-a-days the Mother's Brother is tending to become merely one of the relatives whose duty or pleasure it is to give gifts to his sisters' children on certain occasions. Economically, socially, and ritualistically his importance is decreasing. His son's claims are not pressed or they are merely ignored, since the scope of his choice has widened with changing conditions. It is possible to predict the future of the Maternal Uncle in the field that has been reviewed. With the bonds of kinship weakening, and the ties of social obligations loosening, he will gradually come to be shorn of his special distinction as the Mother's Brother.

As for his position in the matrilineal society it is reflected in the gradual transformation of the *Marumakkathayam* system into the *Makkathayam* or patrilineal pattern. The *Karnavan* is becoming more important as the father of his own children than as the head of the *taravad* and the guardian of his sisters' children. One cannot resist the temptation to speculate as to his future. Some day, with the taboo of incest lost sight of, he may become a suitor

to his sister's daughter, and compete with both cross-and parallel-cousins and other eligible young men in the society. When that time comes society would have by then changed its pattern. The joint family, both patrilineal and matrilineal, is slowly breaking up, and kinship is not so religiously important as it used to be among all the social groups. With trade and occupation taking members of the family far and wide, kindred get separated and kinship ties are lost sight of. The changing outlook of society is causing the barriers of caste to disappear. The old conventions organised on the basis of exogamy and endogamy are losing their meaning. With more changes in the offing the institutional role of the Maternal Uncle is bound to disappear altogether in not too distant a future.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION AND INHERITANCE OF THE HAIR ON THE MID-DIGITAL REGION OF THE FINGERS (HANDS) IN INDIANS.

S. R. K. CHOPRA.

The distribution of hair on the digits attains special significance in the study of inheritance. In the hand of man each digit has three segments—basal, middle and terminal. The thumb, however, has no middle segment. It has been observed that hair is usually present on the basal segments of all the digits and invariably absent from all the terminal ones. It is the middle segments that present wide divergences in the distribution of hair. Since the presence of hair on the basal segments, as well as its absence from the terminal ones, is of an almost universal nature, it is the observation of the middle segments, with its fluctuations in respect of hair, that can be usefully exploited in making certain deductions with regard to hair distribution and inheritance.

In man there is no hair on the skin over the distal interphalangeal articulation. The same is apparently true of the skin over the middle articulation although hair is commonly present on either side of this joint. Of the 250 persons examined, as many as 188 had no hair on their middle segments.

On examination of 54 individuals who had hair present on the middle segments, it was found that there were four individuals who have hair on the middle segments of all the digits (7.4 per cent of the total number studied). In this group 16 individuals were found to have hair present on the 4th finger only (29.6 per cent). Hair were found to be present on the middle finger in only 2 cases (3.7 per cent). These are often present on the 3rd and 4th fingers simultaneously (33.3 per cent). In 14 cases hair were found to be present on 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers at the same time (25.9 per cent). Combinations other than these were not met with in the course of my

investigation. These facts may be stated with precision in the following tabular form :—

No.	Presence of hair on the middle segments of various fingers.	No. of cases examined.	Percentages
1.	Presence of hair only on the 4th finger	16	29.6
2.	Presence of hair on the 3rd finger only.	2	3.7
3.	Presence of hair on 3rd and 4th fingers simultaneously.	18	33.3
4.	Presence of hair on 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers at the same time.	14	25.9
5.	Presence of hair on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers.	4	7.4

Table I. Showing the distribution of hair on the middle segments of the fingers (Hands).

A statement of these data showing the distribution of hair on the middle segments of the fingers of both males and females, in case of Indians as compared with those recorded by C. H. Danforth* in the case of *White* people has been given in the following table :—

Figures collected by	Presence on 4th finger only.	Presence on 3rd finger only.	Presence on 3rd & 4th fingers.	Presence on 3rd, 4th & 5th fingers.	Presence on 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th fingers.
Danforth					
WHITES					
Males	15.6	—	18.3	20.6	3.3
Females	17.6	—	18.6	6.2	2.1
Chopra					
INDIANS					
Males	18.6	—	20.3	20.3	5.5
Females	11.1	3.7	12.9	5.5	1.8

Table II. Showing a comparison in percentages the distribution of hair on the middle segments of the fingers (Hand) among the Whites and the Indians.

*C. H. Danforth, Department of Anatomy, Washington University School of Medicine. See page 189 of American Journal of Physical Anthropology, Vol. IV, 1921 article "Distribution of Hair on the digits of Man".

Taken as a whole, the figures reveal a certain degree of prominence of hair on male digits.

The question as to whether the presence or absence of hair is of hereditary nature remains to be tackled. For this purpose 45 families with 203 individuals were investigated. Five three-generation families with 47 individuals, illustrating the hereditary nature of these characters have been recorded in the form of genealogical charts.

The following table presents in short the nature of parental matings studied and their resultants relating to the heredity of hair on the mid-digital region of the fingers.

No.	Character of Parental Combinations.	No. of Families	Absence	All	Intermediate
1.	Abs x Abs	25	73	—	1
2.	Abs x 1P	4	5	—	1
3.	Abs x 2P	6	5	—	10
4.	Abs x 3P	4	1	1	7
5.	Abs x All (4P)	2	—	1	3
6.	1P x 2P	1	—	—	2
7.	2P x 2P	1	—	—	1
8.	2P x 3P	2	—	—	3

Table III. Showing the character of Parental matings and their resultants.

Abs—Absence of hair on the mid-digital region of the fingers.

2P —Presence of hair on the finger only.

3P —Presence of hair on three fingers.

All (4P)—Presence of hair on four fingers.

Out of the 45 two generation families, 25 families with both the parents lacking hair on the whole mid-digital region of the fingers were studied. These 25 families yielded 74 children of which 73 have no hair on the middle segments of all the fingers, while 1 female child bears hair on the 3rd, 4th and 5th fingers. This solitary occurrence of a particular character in Abs x Abs mating by no means eliminates the chances of the hereditary nature of the mechanism,

which is illustrated by two more examples of the three generation families as given below :

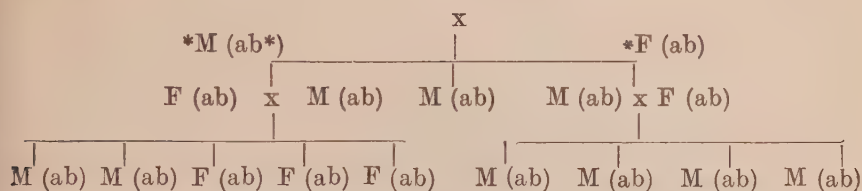
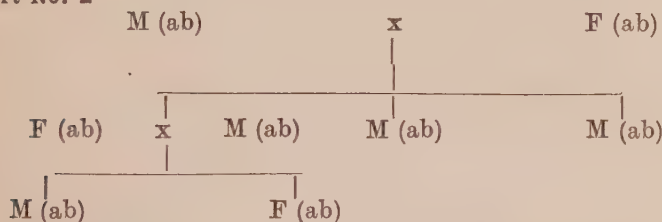


Chart No. 2



These two genealogies clearly indicate that absence of hair is of a hereditary character. The appearance of hair in a single case can be genealogically put as



Now this solitary appearance of a 3P character in a female child in the ab x ab mating can possibly be due to the effect of some "modifying factors that regulate the distribution of hair." "Sex may be one these factors" as Danforth puts it, although he offers no concrete instance.

Again when an individual lacking hair on all the middle segment is mated to its opposite with hair present on only one finger it seems that the offspring obtain no hair on their middle segments. This fact is illustrated in Table III. Four families with Abs x IP combinations were studied. Out of the 6 offspring 5 were with Abs characters, while one acquired the intermediate character. The frequent appearance of more of Abs character in such matings is probably due to the lesser intensity of the hair i.e. presence of hair in only one finger. But when the intensity is doubled or trebled, the

*M denotes male individual.

*F denotes a female individual.

*(ab) denotes absence of hair on all the middle segments of the fingers.

presence of hair dominates over the Abs character. Six families of parental combinations Abs x 2P were studied. Out of the 15 offspring, 5 were of Abs character and 10 of intermediate character. Four families of parental combinations Abs x 3P yielded 9 children, of which 1 has Abs character, 1 all, and seven bear intermediate characters. Two families of parental combinations Abs x All (4P) were examined. Of the children no child was of Abs character, while one was of all character and 3 were of intermediate character. These facts are arranged in Table III.

This shows that the greater the intensity of hair presence the greater its dominance. When intermediate x intermediate were mated as is illustrated by the study of 4 families which yielded 54 children, all the children were found to be of intermediate character.

Reviewing the results of the findings in two aspects—(1) Presence of hair, (2) Absence of the same, we may note that hair are more frequently present on the 3rd and 4th fingers simultaneously, less so on the 4th finger and still less on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th fingers at the same time. A computation of all the fingers taken together, in this respect, registers a further decline in frequency, and the same is true if the middle finger alone is taken into consideration. The presence of hair on the middle segments of the fingers appears to be a dominant trait.

As to the absence of hair, the Indians show Abs character in greater frequency. Out of the 250 individuals examined, 188 lacked hair on the middle segments of all the fingers (75.2 per cent). Recording his findings in the case of White people Danforth says, "Unfortunately no cases were found in which two white parents lacked hair on the whole mid-digital region." This fact pursued with attention, is likely to shed interesting light. Danforth goes on to say in the same connection, "Such families were found among Indians and Negroes and in these cases the children were like the parents". Wide and sweeping generalisations, without sufficient basis, should not be hazarded, but substantial data on this subject may lead to the discovery of a clue possibly relating to racial differentiation.

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CHILDREN IN A POLYANDROUS SOCIETY

D. N. MAJUMDAR

[The Khasas live in the cis-Himalayan districts and in the Uttar Pradesh in the district of Dehradun. Dehradun occupies the northernmost part of the Meerut Division, in the Uttar Pradesh. It lies between $77^{\circ} 35''$ and $78^{\circ} 20''$ east longitude and $29^{\circ} 57''$ and $31^{\circ} 2''$ north latitude and spaces an area of 1,193 square miles. Geographically the district is divided into two regions, viz., the Dun proper which is an open valley enclosed by the Siwalik hills and the outer scarps of the Himalayas, and the hill Parganah of Jaunsar Bawar which is the hill appendage of the Dun. The latter is roughly an oval tract of hilly country with its major axis lying north and south. The boundaries of the two tracts, viz., of the Dun proper and Jaunsar Bawar are sufficiently clear and well defined. The Dun Valley is enclosed within the Himalayan range, the Siwaliks and the rivers Ganges and Jamuna. The river Tons sweeps round Jaunsar Bawar from the north and finally with a 'course trending the main joins the Jamuna near Kalsi.'

Thus, Jaunsar Bawar is the trans-Jamuna portion of the Dehradun district. To the north and east of Jaunsar Bawar lie Tehri, Jubal and Sirmoor. These were feudatory states formerly under Indian Princes. To the south lies the Dun valley. A portion of Bawar is in the Pabar valley entering as a wedge into Dadi and Reingarh states. Jaunsar is bounded on the north by Lokhandi, the Jamuna circles it from the east and the Tons completes the triangle by winding towards the west. The whole of this tract is rugged and full of precipitous mountains with little flat ground. The altitude varies from 1,500 to 11,000 ft. approximately, the highest peak in the area being Karamba. Some of the peaks run into ridges which suddenly descend to dark chasms. The watershed between the Tons and Jamuna runs in a northerly direction from Kalsi through Kotla and Bandla and enters the Deoban block of forests at a height of over 9,500 ft. then circles the boundary of Jaunsar Bawar to Ringali.

For administrative purposes, Jaunsar Bawar is included in the Chakrata subdivision of the Dehradun district. For a long time, it was administered under the provisions of the Partially Excluded Area of the Act of 1935, though from the very early times, many of the provisions of the Indian Civil and Penal Codes were applied without legal sanction. While an excluded area, it was placed in charge of the Superintendent of the Dun, the responsibility for administration of the area ultimately resting with the Governor of the State. Today, under changed political conditions, Jaunsar Bawar like the other tribal areas of the State, lying south of the Kainur range in the Mirzapur district, has been brought under normal administration, on the alleged ground of advancing cultural life in this area, though opinions are divided about such hasty incorporation.]

The typical Khasa family consisting as it does, of a group of brothers as husbands with one, two or more wives and children, represents a social and not a biological group. The prestige of the family is determined by the number of people in it, and it is better to describe the Khasa family as a 'household', in the Lintonian sense. This is true of almost all polyandrous people. Poor families, cannot afford more than one wife which the men share among themselves but as the economic condition improves, more wives are added. Similarly a substantial family when it is on evil days, finds it hard to maintain a number of wives, and the latter find it more convenient

to leave the household and seek divorce on economic grounds. Several families are joined together, to maintain social prestige, and live as an economic unit. Arguments against joint families are seriously repudiated, and the men of a household seldom show any difference of opinion on the need of living jointly. It is on account of the family prestige that the elder brothers are so accommodating to the younger brothers, and wives are given great latitude in fixing attention on any of the brothers, whom they prefer. In several families, the wives are nominally wives of all the brothers; they choose whom they would like to live with, and the elder brothers in spite of their legal status concede without grumble. In a polyandrous household, where it is not expected that the brothers should be born of the same mother, there is often a big difference in age between the brothers and a man of fifty may have a brother aged five or even less. The eldest wife or wives are old enough to be mothers of their young husbands, and no sexual relations are possible with the latter, though the joint wives take care of the household and cater to the comforts of the members. As the younger brothers grow up, it becomes a headache for the elder brothers, to find a wife for the former, and many families cannot afford to have one. In such cases, the elderly wives often are found to sympathise with the younger brothers, and even attempt the impossible by trying to satisfy the emotional needs of their young husbands. So long as the elder brothers, particularly the head of the household, does not secure a wife for the younger brother, he encourages intrigues within the village, though according to the local custom of exogamy, such intrigues do not lead to ceremonial marriage. The younger brothers often take advantage of this situation, and do not work for the family, and yet receive sufficient indulgence.

The solvency of the family is usually determined by the number of hands that a household can command, and the prosperity of the household can be gauged by the jewellery that the women wear, particularly on ceremonial occasions. So long as a wife's needs of ornaments are not satisfied, she is prepared to live with a group of husbands; and when she has secured the ornaments, she may herself propose for a co-wife, who will help her in her domestic work. But the traditional loyalty of the husbands to the first wife, secures to her, her rights and prerogatives and the younger wife has to take orders from her. The young wife moves frequently out of the village, to her parents' village, leaving her children to the care of the elder

wife, and in many cases, we found the elder wife more sympathetic than the husbands to the needs and requirements of the co-wife.

The father is not the biological father but *functional* in a sense, and the children address him by his functional name as for example, father-who-looks-after-the-house, father-who-tends-the-sheep, father-who-grazes-the-cattle and so on. The close tie between the child and mother that we get in stable monogamic family, does not develop in a polyandrous society of the type we get in Jaunsar Bawar. Children are most welcome and their number is not certainly big enough to replace the deaths in the population.

The Jaunsaris have not increased in population and have just survived. Because of the shortage of children there is undue indulgence accorded to them, and parents go all out to feed and clothe their children. Beating of wife may be possible, though not usual, but of children, is unknown in Jaunsar Bawar. Nor do they suffer from any taboos. Children sit by their elders and listen to talks and there is hardly any inhibition imposed on them. The eldest born child is the doyen of the family; he receives more attention than the rest, and as soon as he is born, he is considered the prospective head of the family. By the time he grows up to boyhood, he knows his status and behaves towards his younger brothers and sisters, as the head of the family does. He is often seen with his brothers and sisters, keeping watch over them, giving them work and arranging for their games, punishing them, if necessary. The parents seldom interfere, and when complaints are made, by a particular child, the parents merely console the aggrieved child, by promising to take the aggressor brother to task, which is never carried into effect. Elder boys take care of younger ones, and girls do of their small brothers and sisters, and the parents are seldom taxed so far as their responsibility of rearing the children is concerned. In the household, children are nobody's special responsibility, and yet they receive all attention. They may sleep with their mother, but in many cases one finds, the children attached to the eldest of the wives, whom they address as 'mother' while their own mother may be addressed as 'young-mother' or 'new mother' or by some other name. The frequency of the practice of *chhut* or divorce makes the wife a loose unit in the family and she may even change her affiliation before her child weans. In the latter case, the child is mothered by the co-wife and in cases of more than two wives of the father, by the one who is wet and can provide nutrition. The care and maintenance of the children, therefore, devolves on the

group constituting the household, who see to it that the children get all they need and are looked after as they should be. Even if there is no divorce, the frequent migration of the wife to her parent's village, deprives the children of the company of their mother. The normal psycho-social relationship between mother and children may not develop in the Khasa household, and yet there is hardly anything left undone to satisfy the curiosity of the children. The variety of interests that are sponsored by the periodical fairs and festivals, are catered to by the household, though the mother may not share the responsibility as she does in a monogamic family.

Either due to the nature of the country the Khasas live in or due to the constant fear of accidents, or spirit possession, the Khasa children are never seen alone. They sit in groups, move in groups, and when there are few children in a family or one child, the latter is found with the younger fathers, who may be carrying the child on their shoulders or on their heads sometimes. The children play together quarrel, fight and settle their differences by the initiative of the elder children, and if there are infants, they are taken care of by the elder children, while the parents and all adults in the village may be working, in the fields or inside the house. Dirt and dust disfigures the faces and hands of children, and they eat their food with unclean hands, and are not taught to wash their hands as is the case in the plains. The adults do the same, as water is not a popular commodity on the hills. Yelling, eating, crying and playing are often done together, and dirt and dust make strange impression on children's faces. The sallow red complexion of children is smeared by a crust of dirt, and it becomes sometimes difficult to recognise the children of the Rajputs and Brahmins from those of the Dom who are normally of dark complexion. Infants may receive some attention from the mother in the evening. When the later returns from her work, she may clean her child by massaging with oil, or sponging with warm water, but boys and girls, do not receive such attention and they are sometimes positively unclean.

Children playing together, become unruly sometimes, and a stranger may witness the ungainly sight of children showing and exposing their private parts and making suggestive gestures. Elder boys on the slightest pretext will touch their private parts and scratch in presence of others, old or young, and two or more boys will stand in row to urinate standing and sprinkling the urine in competition. Spitting is a competitive game, and when two children quarrel, they begin by spitting at each other. There is little discipline noticed

among the children at play, and elder brothers punish younger ones, or their sisters sometimes cruelly, but the complaints need not always reach the parents or guardians. Firstly, the latter are not available on the spot, and secondly they do not want to encourage quarrels by taking the aggressive elders to task, as they are those to whom children will be left even if they quarrel. Children generally play in the village, as forests are not safe from animals, particularly from bears, while every forest has uncanny spots where the children learn not to frequent. Any flat surface is good for play, and they move from place to place to shift their venues of recreation. Seldom do children receive any training in their childhood for any occupation, except when they are asked to help other members of the household, for storing grain, feeding goats, cleaning the threshing floor and in odd jobs. There is little sexual division of labour in the Khasa household for children, and they help the father or mother as required, in their duties, though the boys show preference for work normally done by the men. Female children follow their mother to fetch water, or collect fuel with their mother, the boys imitating the men by taking to spinning. There is little economic responsibility which is taught to children, full *laissez faire* being the normal attitude to children among the Khasas.

The number of women in Jaunsar Bawar being small, in any children's group there are more boys than girls. As the latter, when they are of six years of age or more, move with the women, the playing squads are mostly of boys with a sprinkling of smaller girls. Leadership is not very much marked and there may be no leader as such among the village children. Children playing in the courtyard of a house, take counsel from the eldest child of the house, and break up play when the latter signals to do so. When they move to another courtyard, the eldest boy or girl of the house assumes some kind of leadership. The *Seana* (headman) family has always a higher status in the village, and boys and girls from such families, receive more attention from their parents. They are generally well dressed, well fed and taken more care of. Many a time, I saw the play break when somebody from the house came to call back home the *Seana's* children; the others appeared to have no fixed routine for food and lingered away from the house as long as they wanted to. In many villages, the *Seana* family has been split into several independent households, and when they hear that the *Seana's* children are called back to take their meal, they also shout for their boys and girls, whether the time was ready for the

meal or not. Many children know this, and linger in the play ground till the second round of play begins with the return of the *Seana's* children.

There is not much of overt jealousy among the children ; the difference in status is known and accepted as it were. But family quarrels are hereditary, and there is little chance of children belonging to families having feuds to settle to come together, and even if they want, they may not be allowed to. Family feuds start when a person curses another person, or when on oath, one man denies a loan he has received or uses witchcraft against another family or its cattle, or invokes the aid of Mahasu (the great god) against another family. Every quarrel is raised to the supernatural plane and sanction is sought of gods to avenge when they can, or they leave it to be avenged by the descendants. Children learn of the feud from their childhood, and are reared up in the family tradition. Family chest provides the source of litigation, and many families are prepared to starve or live on lean diet but will not touch the chest, so that the family feud may continue. It is always difficult to assess the economic status of people in Jaunsar Bawar, for those who are known to be poor, pour out money in litigation, and the lawyers and touts know how to extract money from them and exploit them on that score.

I asked several boys, why they did not play with some other boys and they immediately told me that they had a quarrel. Further enquiry elicits a fleeting smile, reiterating the same fact. No rational explanation is offered, no effort is made to justify the quarrel, and calmly and confidently, they affirm the fact of a family feud. Even men and women, when they are asked about it, do not exhibit any emotion or sentiment ; it is something which is in their marrow, which is part of themselves ; they do not discuss it, it is known, it may be expressed in social relationship, but is normally treated, as a private and personal affair. It is not between families alone that hereditary feuds exist ; villages also have such feuds, and when they meet in fairs and festivals, when they are drunk together at any time, the feud takes shape and manifests in brawls and abuses. The *Seanas* try to prevent such feuds, take precaution, but the clash takes place though it may not lead to fatal consequences. The elders of two villages, often come to grip with the disputants and generally succeed in averting fatal consequences. Sometimes aggressive quarrels are not encouraged by the families having feuds, and I have brought people of different villages having hereditary quarrels to

settle, and members of two families who have fought and still fight litigation, together for hours in my camp. They have exchanged smoke and talked dispassionately on their common problems, but as soon as somebody supported one of the parties in an innocent matter, the other party started giving counter arguments. I found it to my advantage to raise delicate issues before such gatherings, and I was sure that if one of the disputant families resented the question, or protested against my remarks, the other disputant was ready to line up with me and throw light on problems which in their present state of awareness was not possible to ask even. In some cases, the *Seana* is not the *persona grata* in the village, and if you refer to him and say that this is the *Seana's* view, a counter view is put forward, and many facts are told which an investigator may not ordinarily be familiar with. The *Seanas* are clever and they try to make your visit a sort of conducted tour, always sticking to you like a leech, but the villagers are bold today and express their difference in no uncertain terms. Such differences of opinion are found among the children as well. The sons of *Zemindars* try to dominate over those of the tenants or undertenants, and give evidence of differences in status, the latter accepting the situation, but often the boys from the artisan families are found to avoid the children of the *Zemindars* and keep to themselves. The Kolta children move with their master's children, or work for their master's household and have little choice in this respect. I met a very sensible boy in Mohana village. His father was the village musician and belongs to the Bajgi caste, of Dom extraction. He was very keen on studies—he attends a school in Chakrata—and every morning and evening I had occasion to meet him on his way to and from school. I asked him about his friends in the school and he said he had none. On further questioning, he said that it was useless to make friends in the school, for their interests and his were so different. Although he was keen on his studies, he knew that it would not be possible for him to continue, as he had to look after his fields and also to help his ailing mother. I offered him his expenses and promised to help him through school and college if he could qualify himself for that. He smiled and refused my offer, adding that 'one should know his limitations.' He could not be drawn into further conversation on his future studies; 'it was incompatible with his economic status'. I felt sorry for him, but I found such an acceptance of their present status by the lower artisan castes that mere opportunities are not enough to put them in gear. Something more is needed ;

they must be helped to get over the inferiority complex they have developed through centuries of subjugation and denial of ordinary elementary rights of citizenship.

We have already referred to the difference in dress between children of the *Seana* household and those of the villagers. The eldest son, whether he belongs to the substantial households or to ordinary ones, is better clothed and receives more attention than younger children, boys and girls of the same household, and this accounts for the loyalty that develops earlier in Jaunsar Bawar towards the elder brother. I had tried to elicit information on the attitudes of the younger children towards this traditional loyalty to the eldest brother in the household, but every child and grown up person, had one answer to give, 'he is the eldest' and therefore we respect him'; 'he is born first'; 'he is older than all of us'; he is more useful to the family' and so on. In many families, there is the custom of child marriage, and the eldest son may be married at the age of seven or eight, and the weight of this status settles on the child to make him unduly precocious sometimes.

When the household has to be represented in feasts and festivities, in birth, marriage or death ceremonies in another village, the head of the family will take his eldest son with him, or if he cannot go, the latter will go with any other male member of the household, and often we heard people stressing this practice. 'When my daughter was married, X came from that village, Y came from this village, Z could not come but sent his eldest son', so that the eldest son has a recognised status and function in the social and ceremonial life in the village. When a man has to go out of the village, his wife may suggest that the eldest son should go with him, 'he must know his relations', 'he has to do it, why should he not learn it?' 'take him along, and show him what to do'; and the child gets so used to this fact of seniority and future responsibility that he would leave his play and go without grumble or excuse. The eldest son of the family learns his duties and shares his responsibility earlier than it is done by his counterpart in the plains, and he becomes an useful member of the household earlier than those of his age-group in the plains. On several occasions, I was received by a young boy of 12 years of age, in his house, while his father and father's brothers were away, and the child behaved, exactly as was expected of the elders of the household; he answered questions with calm and composure; with great confidence, he told me of his land, its yield, his difficulties, the rental his family has to pay, the

condition of the tenants in the village, expressing his views as a consummate householder. Once I saw a young boy in his sick-bed, he had been lying ill for about fifteen days, his parents and young brothers and sisters were all out; he was alone. I walked in, and found him massaging his forehead with his right hand; he was suffering from excruciating pain, but he was neither weeping, nor wanted somebody to be near him. I asked him, why his mother or any of his fathers was not with him. He said calmly, 'O, they are busy just now'. This extraordinary self-confidence and composure gained early in life makes the household a solid unit, and explains the conservatism that characterises family life in Jaunsar Bawar.

The Jaunsari boys who go for their education in Dehradun or elsewhere, are known to be quiet and of serious disposition. They always appear older than their age, and do not identify with the boys of their age group in the school. They do not adjust easily to new environment and sometimes they are misunderstood for their behaviour. Once I was invited by a graduate student in a Jaunsar village, to tea. We were asked to come at 4 P.M. on a Sunday in June. I reached the village with my two students exactly at 4 P.M., but we found our host absent. His younger brother came out and received us. We were asked to sit and wait for the host. We were engaged in conversation by the younger brother of the host, a boy of ten years or so. We waited two hours, but there was no sign of the host. We were offered tea without sugar, and we were glad to have it, as we were thirsty and expected the offer. When we were returning about 7 P.M., we met the host on our way, with a packet of sugar. He did not apologise for not being in the house, nor did he explain the reason of his absence; on the other hand he asked us to follow him to his village and said he would give me and my students 'hot tea'. We excused ourselves and came back. Later on, two days after, a friend of this young man informed us that the host of that day having found that there was no sugar, had run to fetch it from Chakrata and that was the reason of his being absent, a little mis-timing and nothing else.

Girls are audacious and appear to be sexually more aware than the boys. They generally keep company of elderly girls, and as the village girls or *dhyanties* enjoy inordinate latitude in sex life, they pick up all the information they need while young. Some girls are married young, while they are of six or seven years' and even at that age, they are seen to blush when they are asked about

their husbands, or of their father-in-law's village. In a quarrel between two small girls each one was accusing the other of what they called reproachable behaviour, and even the presence of a stranger did not still them to decorum. In one village in Bawar, where I was camping for a week, every night I played my gramophone to the village women. One night I had a big crowd of women and girls around me, who came to hear the music. As the night advanced, the married girls dropped out one after the other, and when some of them were lingering, the small girls reminded the late birds about their responsibility. When I asked the girls, why were they making noise about it, they told me, that a particular woman was to sleep that night with a particular husband of hers, and this young man was an angry man and he would not brook delay. Many girls told my girl students about their sexual experiences, and how it all started. Even girls before they menstruate, may go through the experience and the parents normally do not take any notice of such lapses. Small girls know about menstruation and it does not seem to be an embarrassment to them. There is no menstrual ceremony but girls who menstruate for the first time, keep away from play, and are visited by their friends in their homes. Painful menstruation is taken care of, but unlike the tribal people elsewhere, women do not regard pain as caused by evil spirits. First menstruation, must be painful, they admit, and no medicine is needed. When it is chronic, they take recourse to indigenous drugs, which are herbal and known to the elderly women. Wives during menstruation, do not sleep with their husbands; they generally take a corner of the house, till they take bath and are clean again. Many girls suffer from menstrual irregularities, and dysmenorrhoea is pretty common. Barren women confess to having chronic menstrual disorders, and indiscriminate use of herbal drugs, and both are probably responsible for the high incidence of sterility. Menstrual flow is controlled by plugging with green grass or soft leaves made into pads, which free women from embarrassment. Girls pick up their domestic roles without any systematic initiation, and even songs and dances are learnt by them without help from their elders. They sing along with the elders, stand in line behind the elderly women, while the latter dance during the festivals, imitate the steps and the manipulation of fingers, which is the most technical part of the dance in Jaunsar Bawar, and soon become adepts in the arts of dancing and singing. Girls in their parents' house do not receive any special treatment as the boys do, particularly such as the eldest boy in the family receives, and

they are keen to grow up and leave for their husbands' village only to put on the dress and ornaments that are meant for wives ; but once they are entitled to them, and put them on, they frequently want to return to their parents' village, and this is a problem of Jaunsar villages.

Education is spreading among the people of Jaunsar Bawar, several students have graduated and the educated youngmen are keen on raising their standard of life, and level up with their neighbours. There is a shrewd suspicion of strangers, and ethnographic inquiries are not welcome. This they are frank to admit. While they are becoming increasingly aware of their cultural status and are anxious to mend it, they are not anxious to probe into their social incompetence or their traditional ways of life. They are more anxious to rationalise their cultural life and arguments advanced by them often appear silly and unconvincing. But they want to do their social engineering themselves and have already become intolerant of alien interference. This is a development which one finds in most of the ' marginal ' cultures and great caution needs to be exercised in our overt dealings with them. A few examples, may help us to estimate the values now dominant among the tribal youth of Jaunsar Bawar.

Udam Singh asked me a few questions about the future of his son who apparently did not relish them and was feeling a little embarrassed when behind the door jingling of ornaments was heard and Udam's son left us and entered the inner apartment. The young man returned with a few cups of steaming hot tea. Udam does not like this kind of hospitality, as he thinks that this is a civilised vice and must not be encouraged, but that did not mean, he politely told me, that ' I should not take it '. ' You people from towns cannot do without tea, but we can ', that was his argument, though tea is a popular vice of the hill people. The most outrageous statement came from Rukmini, an elderly woman who has seen fifty Dewalis, as she told me. She was one of the three wives of R. Singh who has a good social status and belongs to the *Seana* family, but lives separately with his three brothers, all above thirty years of age. Rukmini works whole day, she cooks food in the house, collects fuel and tends the sheep during part of the day when others go home for food. Rukmini has no new ornaments, the silver rings she was wearing on her ears, have collected the dust of half a century and have turned all black, her face is shrivelled and the skin loose. She accuses her husbands and her co-wives and does it loudly. I asked

her if I could be of any use, but she suddenly turned humorous and retorted, 'you cannot do anything, my husbands can buy the whole village, they have their safes full of gold, but they would not spend a farthing on us. Even the youngest wife does not get anything and she has left the house many a time to escape the misers, but R. always can persuade her parents to return the young wife for he has plenty of money and her parents know it,' but I tell you, she said, 'they are misers, if they die they will come back to watch the gold' and Jaunsaries believe that they do so. When asked about the attitude of her two sons, Pritam Singh and Kaban Singh both in their teens, she yelled out and said, 'O, they have taken after their fathers', small snakes or big snakes, all have the same venom.'

One Sajjan Singh, I met in the Gandhi Memorial Eye Clinic, a mobile unit that visits Chakrata every summer to treat eye cases for the Jaunsaris suffer a lot from eye troubles. Sajjan had his eyes operated for cataract and they were bandaged. He felt some pain and I used to sit by him when I could and talked about life. Sajjan had a son in the Dehradun College, who was failing in his examinations. He asked if I could do something to help the boy. I listened to him, and encouraged him by saying that when I got back, I would discuss the matter with the principal. He was happy and was in good humour for some days, in spite of his pain in the eye. I enquired how much he had to pay for his son's education and he gave me the following particulars, although he seemed to be bad at arithmetic. I calculated the expenses and the budget ran as follows :—

One tin of *Ghee* per two months

Rs. 68 0 0
or Rs. 34 per month

One maund of wheat flower	..	..	18	0	0
Half a maund of rice	..	..	10	0	0
Dal, 10 seers	..	..	8	0	0
Books on average	..	..	30	0	0
Hostel Dues	..	..	22	0	0
Schooling fees	..	..	25	0	0
Extras, washerman, barber etc.,	..	..	12	0	0

Monthly Total 159 0 0

A monthly expenditure of Rs. 160 per undergraduate student in Dehradun is too high a sum, but I was told that the boy sends occasional telegrams for further sums which the father readily responds to. The drain has been continuing for five years but the

father did not think it was a burden on his resources. Although we have given the expenses in terms of the price level existing in the town, all provisions are supplied from Sajan Singh's farm, therefore, most of the supplies do not involve money payment. What Sajan devoutly wished for was a degree for his son which was not coming. Parents are anxious that their sons should get education, University degrees particularly, but as they do not know how much is needed for their expenses, they are very often duped by their sons. The sons know the length of the family's purse and this makes them spend indiscriminately. Parents send money without comparing notes with others who have educated their sons, as they are not willing to let others know about their financial competence. The young men in the schools and colleges spend money indiscriminately and very often tell lies to their parents to get additional money. They give wrong and inflated accounts and ask for money to buy books which they do not need and do not buy either.

It is, however, a passing phase, and I think, with more education and more contacts with other people these anomalies will disappear. Much of the suspicion against strangers, ethnography and social workers, can be explained, as it is the youth of Jaunsar Bawar, who has galvanised it, but the zemindars have different reasons; contraband opium, liquor and unlicensed guns, fear of higher assessment of land revenue, and their anxieties to conceal their economic status combine to work up a defensive attitude—which supports inertia and sanctions traditional loyalties.

‘RANG-BANG’ IN THE CHANGING BHOTIA LIFE

R. P. SRIVASTAVA.

This paper deals with the Bhotias (so-called) of Almora district inhabiting the valleys of Johar, Darma, Byans & Chaudans. These Bhotias (or Bhotiyas) should not be confused with the people called Bhotias in Bhutan, Sikkim and some eastern parts of Tibet and Nepal, since the Bhotias of Almora have little in common in their cultural life with the Bhotias elsewhere.

1. Environmental Setting

Though the whole of Almora district is situated well within the Himalayan system, it has been roughly divided into two parts. The southern part of the district is characterised by open, irrigated and fertile valleys where terrace cultivation is the rule. The mountains in this part are called the sub-Himalayas. They are sufficiently low in altitude and are covered with extensive forests. The northern part of the district lies within the central chain of the Himalayas. Here the mountains are bleak and rugged, and full of deep gorges and precipices. To the north of this chain lies the Tibetan plateau and the Kailash chain of mountains. This is both lower in altitude and more arid than the central chain of the Himalayas.

India and Tibet are separated from each other by the Indo-Tibetan water-shed. It is a continuous ridge of great altitude and runs in north-westerly and south-easterly directions towards Kashmir and Nepal respectively. This ridge lowers down at places to provide passes into Tibet at heights ranging between 17,000 ft. and 19,000 ft. These passes are open for traffic only for 5 or 6 months and remain closed for the rest of the year on account of heavy snows.

The snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas, however, do not lie on this ridge. From this watershed-ridge start ranges roughly at right angles to it towards the south. There are a series of such spurs thrown out at right angles and it is on these that the high, snow-covered peaks like Kamet, Trisul, Nanda Devi, Nandakot, and Panchachuli etc. are situated. In between these south-ward running ridges run the great and small rivers of this region, originating in the glaciers and joined by the roaring torrents flowing in the innumerable ravines both of the water-shed and the ridges. Since all the routes lie along the courses of rivers and rivulets, and all Bhotia

settlements lie along these flowing waters, a study of the river-system alone can reveal the real character of the habitat of 'the Bhotias' in the Himalayas or else the whole thing appears to be a tangled mass of peaks, elevations and steep declivities.

The Bhotias inhabit five such river valleys in U.P. River Kali which, in district Almora, forms the boundary line between India and Nepal, is joined by river Kuthi-yanti near the village Gunji, the nearest Indian village to the Indo-Tibetan border *en route* to Taklakot. The Bhotias living in the valleys of these two rivers are called Byansi and Chaudansi Bhotias. Towards the west of Byans and Chaudans lies Darma (or Dhauli) river valley inhabited by Darma Bhotias (Darmia). They are separated from each other by a succession of high ridges of the spurs thrown out from the Indo-Tibetan watershed. River Dhauli meets the river Kali near Khela village. As such there are two routes from Khela—one along river Dhauli leading to Darma and the other along Kali leading to Chaudans and Byans. Again to the west of Darma valley lies the valley of river Gori, separated from Darma by a broader succession of high and rugged Pancha-chuli Peaks' spurs. This valley is called Johar and is inhabited by Johari Bhotias. In Garhwal, similarly, there are Niti and Mana Bhotias (Nitwal and Marchha) inhabiting two separate river valleys.

2. Bhotia

Several explanations are available as to how these people came to be called Bhotias. The region inhabited by them is called *Bhot* which is said to be a corrupt form of '*Bod*' meaning, according to some, followers of Buddha or of Buddhism. Atkinson mentions in his gazetteer that the western part of Tibet adjoining Bhot has been called *Tu-Pot'e* in the 11th century in the records of Tartar Liaos. And since '*P*' and '*B*' are often confused with each other in Tibetan, *Pot* became *Bot* and *Bhot*. But as pointed out by Dr. D. N. Majumdar in the preface to Mr. K. S. Pangtey's "*Lonely Furrows of the Borderland*" (Folk Culture Series No. 3) that "the words Bhot and Bhotia were mainly popularized by the British administration, due probably to the cultural similarity with peoples of Sikkim and Bhutan states (*who also trade between India and Eastern Tibet*) which they came into contacts *with*, earlier than they knew the Kumaun Bhotias," (*italics mine*) seems to be a more appropriate explanation of this nomenclature, 'Bhotia', to a people, who always resented it.

3. Glimpses of Bhotia Life

Bhotias are a semi-nomadic people having two or three sets of houses. The nomadism of these people is a regional adaptation to the seasonal cycle, and the nature of their trade with Tibet, Nepal and southern parts of Almora and Garhwal districts. With the advent of summer, they migrate to their habitations near the Tibetan passes, carrying their house-hold and trade goods (chiefly cereals, *gur*, cloth and general merchandise) on sheep, goats, mules, bullocks and *jibus* (a cross between yak and cow). Usually two to four trips have to be made to carry all these trade goods and other necessities up and down—each trip taking about 7 to 10 days. As soon as the passes are declared open by a Tibetan official, the Bhotias go to the Tibetan markets to exchange their goods for wool, salt, borax, goats and butter etc. with their hereditary friends—generally Tibetan Dokpas. The goods are general bartered; Indian, Tibetan, Nepalese and now Chinese currency too are used, but barter is the rule. Before the passes are closed by heavy snows and the valley gets blocked with ice, the Bhotias return by October and move down with their families and goods to their settlements in the lower regions where snow-fall is not very heavy during the winters.

By December and January, they move to Nepalese and Indian villages for the exchange of salt, wool, borax, etc., with food cereals, and *gur*, etc. Cereals and other goods are collected till April, when the migration for Tibet begins again.

Bhotia women weave fine blankets, shawls and carpets from out of the Tibetan wool and these are sold in annual fairs at Jauljibi (15th November). Bageshwar (15th January) and Thal (15th April) in winters. Men usually do the spinning only, though women may also do it. But weaving like milking the cow, is done generally by women exclusively (excepting the Johar valley), so much so that a man if found weaving with a belt around his waist is fined one or two bottles of the local brew by the women—a fine which is always paid.

Agriculture to the Bhotias is only a subsidiary occupation except in *patti* Chaudans where the people can raise two crops in their valley and consequently their trade with Tibet is only nominal. Since migration involves use of mules, sheep, goats and *jibus* the poorer Bhotias who do not possess these animals for transport are compelled to settle down to agriculture or act as servants. The Bhotias engaged in trade, generally lease their land to Khasiya Zamindars of lower Almora and Garhwal regions on a 50 : 50 basis. The

Bhotia gets 50 per cent. of the produce as rent of the field. The Bhotia trader as such remains a collector of cereals, and other trade goods without agricultural distractions. In the higher regions, the fields are not terraces alone but also broad and levelled plains probably rendered as such by glacial and river actions. These fields are full of stones and only one crop of *Oa*, *Napal*, *Phaphar* and potatoes etc., is raised here. Ploughing and seeding the fields is done by males only. Plough is drawn both by animals and men. The women fetch water and fuel, cook and nurse children and do the weaving. The men are away for months together from their women-folk and children.

His contacts with different people and nature's frowns have made the Bhotia sturdy, hardworking, friendly, genial and yet shrewd. He smiles at hardships, goes to the highest ranges and impossible looking places, constantly spinning as he walks. He is a lover of music, so much so that in Darma, Byans and Chaudans *pattis* the boys and girls dance, drink, and sing throughout the night and go to their jobs early morning.

4. Rang Bang

Rang Bang (also called Rambang, Rang Bhang and *Khel*) connotes a social gathering of young boys and girls, generally at night in a house or a field for dance, drink and music. Atkinson in his gazetteer mentioned the existence of certain houses outside the village set apart exclusively for 'Rangbang'. But he has not mentioned whether these houses were also used regularly by young boys and girls for sleeping and neither is there any mention of the hierarchy of functionaries in such club-houses. Probably it was only taken for granted that Rangbang was an institution similar to the *Gotul* or the *Morung*.

Unfortunately therefore, to the people outside Bhotia regions (and even to Johari and Garhwal Bhotias where this practice does not exist at present) Rangbang has come to mean a practice of licence and debauchery. Even Bhotias of Johar valley join hands with other Hindu castes of Almora in censuring this institution. But to the Bhotias of Darma, Rangbang is only an entertainment and a recreation after the day's hard work. Bhotias who came to Almora for education, went back preaching to their people the evils (!) of their age-old customs and practices. Coupled with these enthusiastic reformers who had suffered humiliations among the Hindus at Almora and were convinced of the evil of all their institutions, dissimilar to those of Hindus, the influence of Hindu

pilgrims passing to Kailash and the ascetics who have established their *ashramas* in these regions, has been no less. Young boys and girls, however, do not care very much still for these opinions while they drink, dance and sing collectively. They do, of course, now take particular care to conceal every information about these meetings, and tell openly that they do not have the Rangbang any more.

5. Functioning of Rangbang

The much talked-of existence of a 'Rangbang-kuri' outside the village in Darma was denied by all and sundry, and the Rangbang-gatherings which I attended during my tour of Darma valley in 1952 were all held in ordinary, vacant houses within the village or in an open field. Similar was the practice among Byansi and Chaudansi Bhotias.

When a group of boys decide to hold Rangbang at a particular place, they invite the girls of other near-by villages either through a messenger or by whistles. Some boy stands up on an elevated place or a high rock in his village and then attracts the notice of girls working in another village by either waving a piece of cloth in the air or by whistling special tunes. Villages in Darma and Byans are generally situated on both the sides of the rivers and therefore these messages reach from one village to the opposite one very quickly. Boys and girls belonging to the same *ranth* (clan) are not allowed to participate in the same rang-bang gathering. If a village has only one *ranth*, the whole village behaves as an exogamous unit and the boys of such a village have to invite girls from other villages. But in a more favourably populated village like Kuti, there are two *ranths* (*harpya* & *pangpya*) and both of them are exogamous units. In such villages, conveying the message and a subsequent rangbang gatherings is easier events on account of proximity. The initiative for the gatherings does not necessarily lie with the boys. It is a common practice for the girls to invite the boys in turn and arrange everything for their entertainment. Since girls and women enjoy sufficient liberty, they make every arrangement for bedding, food and *chakti* (the locally distilled liquor) quite easily. (The women are the traditional brewers and it is their monopoly).

As sun begins to set, boys and girls assemble at the appointed place. The girls take particular care to put on clean clothes and look smart. The boys on the other hand, after their usual dose of 'chakti', take care to carry a bottle of this distilled brew in

the inside coat-pocket or concealed somewhere beneath the shawl (*Pankhi*).

6. Liquor, Music and Dance.

Liquor has a special significance in these gatherings. "It helps us to get over the day's fatigue, warm ourselves in the cold and also to get over the shyness thoroughly, so that we may dance and sing freely" is a typical answer to defend their getting boozed. Most children in Darma and Byans learn to drink and smoke between the ages of 3 and 5 years. A father will pass on the *biri* end to his 4 year-old son with as much indifference as if he were handing over only a piece of bread. Even among the educated people today, the attitude towards it is one of mild amusement, if not of active encouragement. Liquor is first offered to the invitees. It is poured-out in small wooden cups inlaid with silver. The custom is not to empty it in one draught. The one to whom the filled cup is offered only takes a sip or two or more but always leaves something in it. It is then refilled to the brim and offered to the next man or woman. He or she does the same and the cup is refilled. Thus the round goes on. In subsequent rounds if some-one does not want any more, he or she may empty the cup and then no more will be offered soon. It is considered unmannerly to empty the cup at the first instance. Cigarettes and *biris* are freely smoked by both boys and girls.

After the proper atmosphere has been created, dance and music begin. Harmonium too has now found a place in the rangabang orchestra. All Bhotia music is in *Gorkhali* (a dialect of Nepali Hindi) although Bhotias in these three *pattis* speak a language more akin to Tibetan. The music pattern is also very much akin to the Nepalese music in the western-most parts of Nepal*. The burden of this music is an invocation to a bird called *Neoli* which is known for its sweet voice. The lines repeated are :

"*Neole, Neole ! Neola Hare, Bhola Nani !*

Neole, Neole ! Neole soa, Bhola Nani. Bhola Nani !"

After these lines have been repeated a number of times, the battle of wits begins. The boys say something addressing the girls and the girls have to reply to it. Sometimes, a boy stands up, dances and says two lines of poetry (composed at the spur of the moment) to a girl. Then all the boys and girls cry and repeat the two lines

*It is said that Rangabang itself resembles the Nepalese *rodighar* where men and women dance and sing in a similar way.

mentioned above. Now the girl either stands up or keeps sitting and answers the boy. In her answer, she also says something to which the boy will have to reply. Thus, the competition goes on for hours. When either of them finds it difficult to reply others join in as helpers.

By way of an example of the character of these songs, the following English rendering of a question and its answer is given :

BOY : I have brought a bottle of wine and a *seer* of mutton ;
Times are bad ; help me to keep my prestige ; don't
deceive me.

GIRL : Times are bad indeed, and oranges are costlier. You
bring no salt or wool from Tibet. How can I eat
oranges ?

In the girl's reply, there is also a question, to which the boy will have to reply.

Composed as these lines are on the spur of the moment, their first lines usually do not mean anything. The last words of the lines must rhyme with the questioner's lines. These musical pieces do not also comprise either their folk-songs or any philosophy. They generally refer to daily-routine incidents with a touch of romance and love-making.

Another variety of songs popular in rangbang is the one which deals with the unsocial deeds of a man. Making such songs is called *geet lagana* (setting a song against some-one). These songs are very much enjoyed since they always 'kill' a character and ridicule some socially undesirable act. By ridiculing the non-conformist, these songs serve as an agency of social control. The boys and girls have a horror of being laughed at through such songs. If a person's mischief is exposed and a song is set against him (which is generally always done), he is compelled to leave the company and even his home for a long period or permanently. In these songs, the greater is the harshness shown to the offender, the louder is the appreciation of the audience.

When I visited *patti* Chaudans, a Bhotia boy had been recently converted to Christianity. He was in love with a Christian girl and in order to be able to marry her, as I was told, he agreed to the conversion. After the conversion this boy, Magan Singh, alias Magga, married the girl, Sushila. Bhotia girls looked upon this conversion and marriage as an insult, since Magan Singh did not consider them fit to be his spouse. A song, as could be expected, was

set against him and I heard all over the three *pattis*, even small kids crying :

“*Nirjati man dubyo Magga, Haay, Maya Sushila...*”

(Magga has been drowned in another caste. What a lament ! The entangling web of Sushila !)

Dance in rangbang gatherings is not very spectacular. The boy only gets up, bends forward a little, raises and thumps his left and right foot alternately, swaying his trunk and throwing his arms in the direction of the thumping foot. He also makes a circle when the burden of the music (*Neole, Neole & Bholanani*) is repeated by the whole gathering. Sometimes the boys and girls stand in two separate groups opposite to each other, but their movement is to the left and right. Only a pace is moved and the trunk is swayed with this movement. While dancing it seems as if the dancer is only staggering on his two feet alternately and when drunk, the dancer's show is a picturesque staggering.

7. Rules For Sleeping

It is compulsory for the participants of rangbang to sleep at the same place. If some one slips away to his or her home for sleeping, the offender is generally punished. He or she may be debarred from attending future rangbang gatherings. The punishment is condoned after the rangbang community has been entertained with food or liquor and ‘good behaviour’ promised for future.

When the participants begin to get tired, they lie down on the woollen carpets (Dans) provided by the hosts. Those present, usually pair off for sleeping. Every boy sleeps with his ‘girl’ beside him but more than a dozen such pairs are huddled together in the same room which is hardly ever bigger than 15 ft. x 12 ft. This pairing-off while sleeping is not always necessary. If the number of girls is less than that of the boys, the girls will sleep with their boys but the surplus boys will sleep separately in the same room.

Whether intercourse takes place while sleeping or is possible under these conditions cannot be said definitely. My Bhotia friends say that usually it does not since it is not possible without letting others know it, more so when 10 or more pairs are on the floor beside one, and so close that there is hardly any space for a man to move even his limbs. Excessive in-take of liquor and exhaustion also probably lull them into a fast sleep. I was also told that formerly sexual intimacy was never thought of, but now the Bhotia boys who have returned from the cities often seek to exploit this

institution, if they can find a girl or a widow to yield to their designs.

There is no doubt that in spite of this free mixing, sexual union is condemned and a child if born from rangbang contacts is looked down upon. Such children are known as "*Rangbang-ka-khenta, khenti*" and these do not have any social status in the Bhotia society. Several methods of abortion are practised in such cases of pregnancy. Acid has gained sufficient popularity as it is always available in every home kept for dyeing purposes.

8. Rangbang and Marriage.

Marriages in *patti* Byans and Chaudans are generally arranged at rangbang but in Darma, the girls are betrothed in childhood. A few families in Chaudans and Byans have taken to betrothal and the Hindu way of marriage to identify themselves with the major cultural group around but the number of such families still, hardly exceeds two figures. These are generally the richer people who can withstand and flout social censure. The commonly accepted custom for marriage is "*by capture*" or "*elopement*" or a combination of both. Even in Darma, where early betrothals are not uncommon, final marriage is not possible without the girl being bodily lifted by her husband and his friends and taken away to their village. These betrothals do not always lead to the marriage of the betrothed. When both the boy and the girl grow up they attend Rangbang, develop intimacies, and exercise their discretion. The custom of cross-cousin marriage has been carried to monopolistic limits. In Darma and Byans a girl is allowed to marry elsewhere only if her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son has declined to marry her or is married already. (Marriage between parallel cousins—with both father's brother's children or mother's sister's children is tabooed and considered incestuous.)

When a boy and a girl develop intimacy and understanding at rangbang, they may decide to marry. The boy goes with a company of friends to the girl's village, where a girl-friend of the prospective bride tells them the whereabouts of her friend. The boys then find the girl out easily, and bodily lift her away to their own village. In such cases of mutual agreement, the whole business looks like an elopement, but where a girl has been secretly trying to elope with a boy, and her cross-cousin who also wants to marry her comes to know of it, he surprises her one day with his companions and then, she is bodily lifted, taken away and locked up in a room. Sometimes, even married girls, who keep attending rangbang parties after marriage for entertainment and pleasure but really do not want to

marry anyone else again, may provoke sufficient passion in a boy so much so that he may also lift her bodily and capture her in a room in his village. He may then request her to seek divorce from her former husband. Thus a real capture takes place, as in the above cases and legally too, according to the customary law of the Bhotias, it does not amount to abduction or kidnapping.

Bhotia marriage and divorce rules are interesting but outside the scope of this paper. It is only intended to show here that the intimacy developed in rangbang is a pre-requisite for a girl's capture. The girl's consent after capture is essential and she does not just bow down to her captor. If she continues to refuse for a few days in spite of all inducement and persuasion, she may be allowed to go back. But no boy ever carries a girl away unless he is sure that the girl will ultimately give her consent. I was told that, after-all, for girls all men are alike. If the girl agrees to the marriage, parental consent is never refused.

9. Post Marital Participation in Rangbang

A striking point about women's liberty and independence even after marriage is, that although, a girl has started living in her husband's house, this does not *ipso facto* give her husband a right over her person. She lives in the same house with her husband, works in his fields, dines with him and talks to him, but refuses to sleep with him, despite his entreaties and persuasions. Normally, this goes on for a year or two after marriage. I met a young man in Darma who was being refused this favour for 7 years by his wife (after marriage) and he assured me that he was not a solitary example.

The reason for this behaviour is that the girls lose their right to attend rangbang after they have started sleeping with their husbands. Marriage is not a disqualification for rangbang participation, but cohabitation even with husband is a disqualification. The girls may have sexual play at home, but cannot get the music, the fun and the entertainment of rangbang there. Post-marital participation therefore is qualified and the argument advanced in its defence by an old man is interesting. He said : ' after a girl has been initiated into the mysterious pleasures of sex by her husband, she is likely to corrupt other boys, and these boys after such an initiation would in turn experiment their knowledge on other girls and then there will be chaos '. But this rationalisation does not sound very convincing. The boys are not ignorant of sex or its physiology. Moreover widowers, widows and even divorced men and women attend

different rangbang gatherings and an assumption of ignorance is a make-believe. Girls, however, learn dangers of pregnancy from their mothers, sisters, and also from the tell-tales and the songs set against maiden-mothers.

Post-marital fun at rangbang may sometimes be greater than pre-marital experiences. As soon as a woman discovers pregnancy, she would begin to oblige her ever-entreating husband and the child would be fathered upon him, when born.

A Bhotia woman earns sufficient money from weaving woollen blankets and carpets, etc., and her contribution in the economic activity is by no means inferior to that of man. She looks after the fields and cattle, weans the crops and reaps the harvest, fetches fuel and grass from the forests, and even inherits all her mother's property including the jewellery on her person, clothes and weaving apparatus. Economically she is an asset to her husband and this fact goes a long way in the *Bhot* region to decide her husband's tolerating-quietly attitude towards her independent and free life. The husband of a young woman knows that if he is strict, she may leave him and there will be many people to receive her in their homes, whereas whom-so-ever he espouses again, he will be faced with the same situation, terms and conditions.

10. Rangbang—An Accepted Behavioural Pattern For Young People

Wherever young boys and girls may get together, the gathering turns into a rangbang party. Even chance meetings result in rangbang. When Bhotia boys and girls migrate in winters, they may be detained in any Bhotia village by the other sex on invitation for holding rangbang. In all migrations, girls are sent a few days before the family migrates. They are supposed to go earlier to collect fuel and grass at the winter home. They stay in intermediate villages for the night and the boys in these villages invariably hold rangbang in their honour. When, similarly, boys pass these villages, the girls of the village invite them. As such during migrations, a young boy or a girl is assured of a nice evening and good fun after the tiring journey. Even where, after the day's march, the tents are pitched at a place away from any village, the young people may find out a field or even a cave to have their *lehel* provided they can get some girls of a different *ranth* in the pitching tents.

In festivals, marriage and even *dhudung* (the ceremony after death), if boys and girls assemble, their music and dance are implied.

After the capture of the girl for marriage, when the captive gives her consent, her girl-friends from her village (called *shasha*) always arrive in a party, usually numbering 8 to 15. These stay with the girl's husband and his friends in his village. They are entertained at *rangbang* with liquor and music, and finally sleep with the husband's friends. The pleasure of the company of these *shasha* girls is the only price which the boy's friends get for helping him in the capture of his bride.

Not infrequently, when the *shasha* girls return to their homes, after three or four days, they may find that their number has decreased. Someone has been detained in the village as a captive, thus obviating the trouble of bodily lifting and carrying her. And if this captive too gives her consent, the poor *shasha* girls will have to come again to the same village a couple of days afterwards for few more *rangbang* nights.

In *dhudung* where relatives are invited from even distant villages to mourn the loss, the young people always find out a suitable place to do their mourning in *rangbang*.

11. Restrictions

For consideration of incest, participation in *rangbang* is limited to persons whose unions are not interdicted by custom. The boys and girls must belong to different *ranths*.

There are no age minima and maxima for the participants. Young kids watch the proceedings, learn the art of music and dance, run at the biri and cigarette stubs and occasionally stand up to mimic the dances. All participation is strictly limited to Bhotias and outsiders (non-Bhotias) may be permitted with some difficulty as spectators. Special permission of the girls here becomes necessary. There is no truth in the belief that Bhotias mix up freely even within the village and even a brother and sister may attend the same *rangbang*. Due to the strict observance of the rules of *ranth* exogamy the above is never possible.

Outsiders are not welcomed at all as participants and the girls always have a horror of a song being set against them for mixing with a non-Bhotia. There may be some cases of extra-marital relationship with outsiders, but such clandestine affairs are not exclusively characteristic of tribal life. Therefore the comment that "from the nature of their occupation, they allowed marriages and extra-marital relationships in the past as well as present. Their social

institutions, especially rangbang, makes sufficient allowance for intermixture with their neighbouring people"*** appears rather amateurish. The Bhotias are possessed of an intense in-group feeling and are quite 'clannish' in their attitudes.

12. Contact, Changes and Reforms

Their closer contacts with the Hindus developed when Bhotia boys began to go to Almora for education and the Bhotia businessmen started coming down to Tarai and the plains for purposes of trade. But this was possible when, during the British days, communication facilities developed, and the roads and tracks were rendered less dangerous. Today these literate Bhotias are ashamed of their customs and practices and are very much ill-at-ease when an inquiry is made about them. Having suffered ridicule and humiliation from their Hindu neighbour, they began to show indifference to their own indigenous customs and rites. With the help of *Swamis* and *Sadhus*, a reformatory wave came to Darma, Byans and Chaudans. Distilling apparatus were burnt and it was decided to stop *rangbangdhudung* and the practice of sending *shasha*. But this decision could not last very long. The young boys and girls rebelled against it saying: "these old devils had fun and enjoyed rangbang, when they were young, but now when they are old and we are young, they would not let us have that fun and joy". At first secretly and then openly, rangbang was started again with a new force in all the villages, reviving 'capture' and *shasha*.

There is one solitary village *Pangu* in Chaudans where these gatherings do not take place. But here the situation has become very much complicated. The boys of this village go to the nearby villages to participate in rangbang gatherings secretly but the girls of this village are kept under strict vigilance and not allowed to go anywhere. This has led to clandestine intrigues. These are condemned by the boys of other villages because, they say, more mischief is possible if one boy and one girl meet secretly at a remote place than if ten boys meet ten girls openly. The girls of other vil-

*** Quoted from Mr. S. C. Tewari's article on the Distribution of Blood group among Bhotias of Almora district, published in *Man In India* (vol. 32, No. 3, page 150). Mr. Tewari, in the footnote on page 150 (in the above article) has levelled charges of *sexual relationships and a hospitable welcome to visitors* against rangbang. My experiences during my Darma, Byans and Chaudans *pattis* have been different. Mr. Tewari who only remained at Dharchula, would have held a different opinion if he had toured the whole region and observed rangbang gatherings in action himself.

lages have also started giving a cold shoulder to the boys of *Pangu* village now.

Another unfortunate change, killing the poetic originality of the Bhotia boys and girls is the introduction of Hindi Film Songs and duets. Film songs, here too as elsewhere, are getting sufficiently popular.

13. Conclusions

(a) The presence of *Rangbang* — a modified form of tribal dormitory — among the semi-nomadic Bhotias is significant, but it appears that it has nothing to do with the protection of women or cattle. The participants are generally too boozed to protect even themselves.

(b) The Bhotias do not have very many taboos on men or women as they have to face all kinds of situations in their periodical migrations and cannot strictly adhere to and put up with a host of taboos. When crops are standing or when some members of the family are away to Tibet or any other place, they have no superstition that an act at home will affect their safety or their business deals abroad. Infidelity is socially condemned, and though chastity has not been institutionally idealized as among the Hindus, there is a moral premium on chastity. In upper Darma, there is no feeling of pollution during menstruation and the woman lives a normal life during this period. As such, there does not seem to be any segregational motive attached to the rangbang.

(c) Its importance as an agency for pre-marital understanding between boys and girls leading to marriage, is obvious.

(d) The role of rangbang as a means of recreation and entertainment in the cultural life of Bhotias is also brought to view by their post-marital participations.

(e) The absence of the hierarchy of functionaries in rangbang gatherings is important. The gatherings are a result of individual effort and influence. As such, in a village, where two groups of influential boys are not at good terms, there will be two different rangbang gatherings. This again throws some light on the recreational function of this institution.

RESEARCH NEWS AND REVIEWS

How the study of peoples can succeed in tracing their racial affinities is evident from an interesting paper published in the *Annals of Eugenics* (Vol. 17, part 3, 1953). The *ABO*, *MNS* and *Rh* Blood groups of the Nigerians, by J. N. M. Chalmers, Elizabeth W. Ikin and A. E. Mourant, based on research conducted under the auspices of St. George's Hospital Medical School, and Blood Group Reference Laboratory, Medical Research Council, Great Britain.

As the newly discovered blood groups, and particularly the *Rh* groups, were applied to anthropological research in many parts of the world, little work was at first done in Africa, though tests on American Negroes suggested that Native Africans would probably show features of special interest.

Determinations have been made of the *A₁* *A₂* *BO*, *Rh* and *MNS* blood groups of coastal Nigerians, pagans of the Jos Plateau, and northern Nigerians, mainly Hausa. The phenotype and gene frequencies so determined do not vary greatly from one part of the country to another. The *Rh* groups show a very high frequency of the cDe (RO) Chromosome, such as is found throughout tropical Africa.

This data clearly indicates that despite cultural and linguistic differences the people of Nigeria are probably more closely related to one another than had been suspected.

* * * * *

The study of reproductivity in women has recently received attention from anthropologists, both in India and abroad. In a paper published in *Man in India* (Vol. 33, No. 1), 1953, Mrs. Tulika Sen has attempted to detail the reproductive lives of several groups of Indian women. Samples have been taken from girls and mothers belonging to three high castes of Bengal—Brahmin, Vaidya and Kayastha (urban), Bagdi (rural), and a small group of women from Travancore—mainly for the sake of comparison.

Data has been collected on the different aspects of the reproductive life of a female—menarche, conception, first child-birth, menarche-conception interval, birth-interval, number of children conceived and born, sex-rates of the first-born, last birth, menopause and last-birth-menopause interval.

Several significant facts have been discovered and confirmed by this study, e.g., that the age at menarche differs according to conditions—not only geographical but also economic and social.

* * * * *

It is widely prevalent notion among the preliterate communities that disease and death are caused by the malaevolent action of some person, living or dead. It is believed that a person who has died with a grievance on the person who wronged him seeks vengeance after death, not only on that person, but may be on his relatives. Sometimes, this results in ghostly feuds between families and groups of Kni which may continue for generations.

To cure sickness caused by such vengeance of dead persons the services of a witchdoctor are engaged, who by some unearthly means, attempts to cure the patient.

In a note in MAN, Vol. LIII, Nos. 3 and 4, 1953, Prof. E. E. Evans-Pritchard has described "ghostly vengeance" among the Anauk of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, giving in detail the beliefs of the people about the ghostly spirits, sickness caused by them (acieni), the potentiality of the doctor (ajua) and an elaborate description of the seance designed to cure the malady.

* * * * *

In the journal of East Asiatic Studies, (published by the University of Manila, Philippines) Vol. II, No. 2, January, 1953, Alfred G. Pacyaya has recorded a *Sugada Dirge* with its English translation.

This dirge is sung in the house of the dead while the body is in state, when the dead body is tied to the *Sangadil* (death chair) and relatives and friends come to "talk to the dead person" before he is taken to the cave of the dead. If the dead be a very old man or woman, the body lies in state for two days and two nights and sometimes as many days until all the members of the family are assembled. No dirge is sung when the dead person is very young. Close relatives of the dead person are sent for before the body is tied to the death chair or before the burial takes place. Afterwards, the body is led to the death chair and taken to the cave of the dead for its eternal rest.

* * * * *

Tribal Africa today is suffering from a number of social, economic and political diseases. European impact upon the native cultures, growth of industrialization and urban centres for trade export

of articles like ivory, gold, diamonds and forest products are bringing about a total change in the life of the natives. The present evolution of the African peoples, from a barbarian jungle folk into a semi-civilized people—raises many problems. Economic, political, social, demographic and religious crises arise simultaneously in the urban centres and in the industrialized regions, where a 'detribalized' proletariat is springing up, and in the rural areas, which are hewing abandoned by the most active elements of the population.

The administrative authorities in French Equatorial Africa realized the grave danger of the situation thus caused to the native peoples of the land and put into operation a plan for social action and fundamental education in order to prepare the people for a better adjustment. The measures thus adopted to combat disintegration include : checks against the abandonment of rural areas, village settlements, modernization of agriculture, co-operative and Native Provident Societies, medical and sanitary facilities, improvement in housing conditions and a communal political forum for the people. J. C. Pauvert in *Fundamental & Adult Education*, (UNESCO), April 1953.

CORRESPONDENCE

In our issue of June 1952-August, 1952 (Vol. V No. 4), we reprinted a brief summary of Dr. Marian W. Smith's article on "Misal—structural village group of Punjab" from the *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 54, No. 1. Since then we have received a communication from Mr. McKim Marriott of the University of Chicago Department of Anthropology, who writes :

I was surprised to see from the column "Research News & Views" in the *Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol. 5, No. 4, that you had been taken in by Dr. Marian W. Smith's wholly erroneous article on "The Misal—a structural village group of India and Pakistan" reviewed on page 185.

"I am sending herewith a reprint of an article from the latest *American Anthropologist* which lists some of the dozens of errors and offers corrections, for your information."

A gist of M. Marriot's article is given below :

In the *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 55, No. 1, January-March, 1953, McKim Marriott has repudiated Marian W. Smith's conclusion that Misal is a basic unit of social structure in the Punjab. Tracing the historical background, M. Marriott writes that by the time the British domination was extended to the Punjab, the British Administration had realized the desirability of recognising the indigenous rural structure for purposes of their agrarian policies. Consequently, "State land law and village custom have interacted from their beginnings. Agrarian rules and classes found in villages today are derived from the long interaction of state and village. . . ." And M. Marriott shows that the "patti" and "tukla" ("thula") are among such basis units ; "patti" being a land estate and "tukla" a block of households. Each unit has its own type of "officers" and social intra-relationships. Misals are described as "voluntary, free-booting armies" having their own recruiting grounds, their having been twelve misals in all ; and the recruiting area of each misal included not only thousands of villages but also several *talukas*, each *taluka* being under powerful post-Muslim era chiefs. These misals ended their existence—not by becoming Ranjit Singh's army as is maintained by M. W. Smith—but through their dissolution as misals and emergence as a class of British Indian overlords. M. Marriott concludes : "Both the meaning of the word "misal" and its historic reference stands in sharp contrast with the routine patterns of rural life."

Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India, by M. N. Srinivas, D.Phil. (Oxon) ; p. xvi plus 267 ; Price 30s ; Oxford, 1953.

Religion does not seem to be as popular a topic with sociologists today as it was previously, perhaps because of the current loss of interest in contemporary religions. However, religion is a fascinating topic as it often embodies in pre-industrial and pre-scientific societies such crucial aspects of a people's culture as the adjustment between the group and its environment, natural as well as human. Accordingly, most of the modern studies on the religion of a people are regarded as meaningful, and are undertaken, in so far as these reveal certain basic attitudes of the people and the culture studied. (This is, of course, also true of such studies as of magic and witchcraft, political institutions, economic organisation and so on). Such segmental studies are undertaken in the belief that sub-groups do very often reflect the wider-group patterns. An anthropologist, however, is interested in the various aspects of a society in so far as they reveal the society itself. This type of interest and study is methodologically, as well as, conceptually different from the older historical-cum-conjectural and descriptive studies on religion; it is certainly more scientific.

Srinivas has, by undertaking to place the various religious rituals of the Coorgs in their proper social context tried, not only a classification of their rituals, but also a construction of their social-group pattern, i.e. their society and its structure. An intensive and 'functional' study of the various rituals, automatically (as a consequence of the method adopted) leads to a wide coverage of social relations and collective behaviour which are in fact the stuff that a society is made of.

From the point of view of religious ritual, Srinivas shows that Coorgs normally owe allegiance to five different social groupings, which may well be regarded as the only affective social forces because the small Coorg society is non-industrial, religious minded, and agricultural; and agriculture is fundamentally woven into the religious ritual. Study of religion in such a society certainly serves as a 'master key' to its understanding.

The author shows that much of the ritualistic behaviour of an individual is bound up with the prosperity of his *Okka*, the Coorg patrilocal and patrilineal joint family. But besides the family ritual, there is the village deity and an elaborate communal ritual cult which is the concern of all the *okkas*. In this village ritual a soli-

ilarity is exhibited by all castes, high and low, since the village is a common possession; Srinivas calls it vertical solidarity or spread (p.31-2,214,218).

There are three other loyalties which go beyond the *okka* and the village. Different castes within a village, although they do take part in common rituals, yet do not do so in exactly the same manner. The hierarchal idea underlying caste expresses itself in many ways (p.210); for instance, all castes do not offer sacrifices and other offerings at the same spot in a shrine or a temple; nor does the same priest preside over the offerings of all castes. This establishes a caste loyalty, which may extend outside the territorial limits of a village and is therefore called horizontal solidarity.

Even otherwise several villages do fairly often engage in some common inter-village rituals. This inter-village territorial unit is called a *nad*.

Finally, there is a vague type of membership of the Hindu religious community of India in so far as some of the Coorg rituals are frankly a borrowal from Hinduism. This process, Srinivas calls Sanskritization, i.e. incorporation into the inter-provincial Sanskritic Hinduism (p.75).

This so-called process of Sanskritization will interest all students of Indian tribal culture, because in the case of tribal culture the silent influence of Hinduism has made deep inroads giving rise to many maladjustments, none of which seem to have arisen in the case of Coorgs, perhaps because they have had a broader cultural base enabling them to be receptive without harming them. Unfortunately, the author does not go into the nature of this process of proselytization, its genesis and its growth. His use of the term Sanskritization is not also very clear. He prefers it to the term 'Brahminization', "as certain Vedic rites are confined to Brahmins, and other 'twice-born' castes." (p.30) Does Sanskritization mean the adoption of Sanskrit *mantras* in rituals? Do these Sanskrit *mantras* have a compulsive force of language? Perhaps; for the author writes: "The greatness of Sanskrit literature and the vitality of Indian philosophical thought in Sanskrit have also contributed to the increasing importance of Sanskritic Hinduism" (p.218). This is too vague and sweeping a generalization as no reference is made to the receptive faculties of those Sanskritized. Elsewhere (p.222), the author seems to invest certain Sanskritic theological ideas with an appeal. He seems to be on a sociologically more firm ground when he attributes the spread of Sanskritic

ideas of the higher castes to their prestige-value (p.31). This is certainly a very interesting topic; and one wishes the author had gone into its details. Someone must.

The author gives absorbing descriptions of such *okka* rituals like *mangala*, *murta* and *Sammanda*, all pertaining to an individual's marriage; and of such village rituals as the village festival. He carefully brings out the various acts and types of symbolism involved in these (cf., e.g. p.93, 97, 133). He also shows how observance of ritual perpetuates society (p.82,101,140). Socially acceptable types of behaviour find ritual acceptance and support whereas socially unacceptable behaviour is ignored and disapproved. Thus, "the solidarity of the elementary family (as opposed to the *okka*) does not obtain expression in ritual" (p.155). Similarly, the concepts of *pole* (ritual impurity) and *madi* (ritual purity) are understood in terms of a structural necessity, "as the essence of a stratified society consists in the maintenance of structural distance" (p.108).

Throughout the book, the influence of the teaching of Radcliffe-Brown, who contributes a foreword, is apparent; it is acknowledged by the author in the preface. He attempts to regard each individual ritual observance as a 'partial activity' which makes a contribution to the 'total activity'.

The author contributes a chapter on Hinduism trying to explain the 'spread' of Hinduism in India. He classifies it into All-India, Peninsular, Regional and Local Hinduism. He also makes several references to the caste system, and refers to it as "the five-fold systems" and not four-fold, as is the general practice. Untouchables are mentioned as the fifth class. Srinivas does not give any justification for this. It is interesting to note that as far back as the pre-Budhism days there was a five-fold hierarchy; *Jatakas* refer to the *Chandala* as untouchables. They were not *Arya*, whereas Sudras were. But no such considerations apply to the contemporary social stratification wherein there is no difference between Srinivas's fourth and fifth categories at the bottom of the hierarchy. One is also surprised to read in Radcliffe-Brown's foreword that "a caste is in its essence a religious group". It seems that Hutton's thesis on caste, seeking to explain a complex institution with reference to multiple causes, is not so widely read back at home as it is in India. If 'caste' is a religious group, it is difficult to understand how the caste structure contains myriads of small and large stratas, with endogamy as their essential plank.

There is an interesting point to which reference must be made. The author tells us that the data were collected before he met Radcliffe-Brown and came under his influence. This may not mean that the presentation and interpretation of his data was not influenced by structural emphasis.

The publishers have done an elegant job to make the book presentable; but they are misleading the common reader when they tell him that this book is the first instance of the application of modern sociological concepts in the study of an Indian people. This is obviously a wrong claim and should not have been made by publishers of reputation, as the Oxford Press.

—T. N. Madan.

Theory & Practice of Social Case Work, by Gordon Hamilton. Second Revised Edition, published in New York for the New York Sectional of Social Work, Columbia University Press (1951), Pp. (vii plus 378). Price \$4.

This is a useful book, which has gone to equip many a social worker and social scientist for their jobs. It was first published in 1940, and since reprinted eleven times. As one who has used this book in one's sociological investigations, I can safely say that the book is a competent tool for professionals and richly deserves the circulation it has had. The present volume has been completely rewritten, with new material, and has a theoretical bias, which makes it all the more helpful. Recent developments and trends in the social sciences find competent appraisal, and we can call it, an *Appraisal of Theory and Practice of Social Case Work*, rather than merely, *Theory and Practice of Social Work*. The author is well known for his work in the field of social work, and has inspired many a would-be professional, and learners by his meticulous presentation and informed and competent analysis of case material. The book is made up of two parts, each part divided into five chapters. Part I includes: (1) Basic assumptions and methods of social case work, (2) The use of relationship, (3) The interviewing process, (4) The use of social resources and the living experience, (5) Agency and inter-agency practice. Part 2, includes: (1) Application and intake processes, (2) Methods of Case Study, (3) Diagnostic and Evaluation Processes; (4) Methods of Treatment and (5) Primary and Secondary Settings. A bibliography at the end is an useful appendix. It is difficult to single out any chapter for a critical evaluation. Regarding the interviewing technique the author's insistence on the points of 'stress' and 'conflict', the emotional

tone, is very significant. Most interviewers, carry out the questionnaire enquiry mechanically. They cross and dot the answers, without any stimulus questions and interpretative comments. Very few try to be *en rapport* with the client; the result is that the answers are yes or no and may be valid for the statistician but not for the social worker. The medium in which and through which the interviewer works is more important than the negative and affirmative answers with which the interviewer fills his columns. The cases noted in the book, are well chosen, and the result is an organised and authoritative account of the present status and ends of social case work. The book should be used by every social worker, and every social scientist; he can choose his own material, but he will find illumination from the analysis and the integration arrived at by the author between generic theory and practice.

—D. N. M.

The Complete Mu-Igala in Picture-writing—a native record of a Cuna Indian Medicine song, by Nils M. Holmer & S. Henry Wassen, Ethnografiska Museet, Goteborg (Sweden); Price Kronor 18.

The Ethnografiska Museet of Goteborg (Sweden) deserve congratulations and gratitude of anthropologists all the world over for publishing up-to-date twenty-one volumes of ethnographic literature dealing with peoples of the world. It is a great contribution to anthropological studies and knowledge about the life of of less-known countries and peoples.

The present volume, a full rendering of the Cuna Indian song *Mu-Igala* or the *Way of Muu* presents the native medicine-song in Roman script and in picture-writing with an English translation, notes and comparisons. *Mu*, among the *Cuna* is regarded as the original mother, a personification of the all-pervading, all-powerful spirit of the sea. She is thought to be responsible for the "birth and the coming into Existence of a Human Being"; *mu-igala* thus is a song sung under the bed of the woman who is bearing a child.

Written in 1951 pictograms, the song gives in graphic detail the pangs of the pregnant mother, unfruitful efforts of the midwife to bring about safe delivery, the calling-in of the medicine-man, the elaborate procedure he follows, the rituals, hymns and incantations, he adopts, the gods and goddesses he propitiates, and closes with the decisive event—"the child is born".

The *Mu-Igala*, it appears, is one of the most elaborate and well-preserved religious folk-songs of all preliterate cultures. The

song is essentially poetical in character—typical of the Cuna—and is a “practical guide” for a study of Cuna religion, medicine and magic.

The explanatory chapters, illustrated, attempt at throwing light on the identity and concept of *Mu* among the Cuna, cosmogenic beliefs of the people, their ideas about conception, and birth of a baby, the function of rituals in Cuna Society, the status of the medicine man and the belief of the people in the efficacy of magic and witchcraft. The material is of immense value to the student of religions in understanding the beliefs of man under relatively underdeveloped conditions and what is called the “primitive state of society.” The pictures in which the song is written are beautifully copied.

It is needless to comment upon the printing and get-up of the publication. They are simply superb.

K. S. M.

Perspectives (Quarterly), published by Intercultural Publications, Inc., New York (U.S.A.), Annual Subscription—12s.

This is the first number of a new magazine published from America—a magazine devoted, according to its objectives, to put forward the *culture* of the United States in accurate *perspective*. Its main effort seems to be to acquaint Europe with the literature, music, and fine arts of the New World; hence its publication in several European languages—English, French, German and Italian at the present, “with Spanish and perhaps others, to follow.”

To quote the publishers: “certain accidents of history, combined with commercial and political pressures, have had unfortunate consequences for adjustments about American culture in other lands. Various misconceptions exist about American culture abroad, and a distinction of its values has been built up, quite as often by the shortcomings of some of its own phenomena as by antagonistic political propaganda. *It will be a main function of Perspectives to show that the spiritual and artistic elements in American life have not been sterile.*”

The present issue of the magazine is divided into seven sections, dealing with: Art, History, Literary Criticism, Music, Narrative, Philosophy and Poetry. It is a commendable effort, on the part of the publishers of *Perspectives* to put forward the traits of American culture—relatively lesser known than American politics, economy or trade. We are sure this will be a better means for mutual under-

standing and goodwill between opposing ideologies than peace conferences or the mass-scale propaganda carried out by the American press and radio.

Excellent printing and get-up make the magazine attractive.

K. S. M.

The Race Concept—Results of an Enquiry, United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation, Paris, Price \$.50 ; 2½s; or 125 Fr.

In 1949-50 UNESCO called a conference of scientists belonging to different nationalities to draft a 'Statement on Race'. 'Race' in recent years, has become a menace to world peace, and in order to counteract certain widespread misconceptions about race and put forward a scientific opinion, this statement was made.

The statement was well received—it created a stir in the ranks of physical anthropologists and geneticists all the world over. Many of its contentions and terms were much criticized.

As a result another conference was called in June, 1951 of 12 scientists, representing physical anthropology and human genetics and a second statement was drafted. This statement was again submitted to 92 scientists for comments and criticisms.

The booklet contains texts of the two statements and the criticisms of various sections of the statements by some leading anthropologists and geneticists. A 103 page handy volume on such a wide topic as race, would be immensely useful to students of physical anthropology.

K. S. M.

Janpad : Quarterly journal of the Hindi Janpadiya Parishad, Vice-Chancellor's Lodge, Hindu University, Banaras, subscription Rs. 6 annual.

Janpad marks the inauguration of a new era in the field of Hindi literature. For the first time in Hindi, is an important regular journal published which has for its objective the collection, analysis and critical evaluation of the folk literatures of this country. This great land with its multi-coloured life from Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Punjab to Assam, presents to the anthropologist and the folk-scientist a vast variety of material in the form of songs, stories, myths and legends, dances, fine arts, rites and rituals and the aesthetic aspect of the people's lives. Till now, we have been very much negligent towards our folklore. A few societies with a

handful of workers have been doing all they could, but most of their work was confined to English which could not possibly reach the doorsteps of the people. The linguists hesitated to recognise the importance of folk-literature and this rift between the scientists and the linguists was a serious cause of the neglect shown to folk culture in past years.

We are glad this misunderstanding is over, still more that this attempt to clear it has come from Banaras an orthodox centre of learning. But it has come, and for this we have to thank the progressive-minded Vice-Chancellor of the University who also happens to be the Chairman of this Society.

A perusal of the Editorial Board is sufficient to satisfy us about the policy of the journal. There are linguists, poets and writers, critics and historians ; we wish there were a few scientists as well.

The three issues of the journal, published so far are ordinarily well-done. The articles represent the folk-cultures of the entire country. A few articles deserve special mention : *Goti* custom of the Santhals (No. 3), *Bir Baramh* (No. 3), and Rajasthani Version of the legend of Rasalu King (No. 2).

The general trend of the articles shows a leaning towards the literary rather than the scientific side of the subject. While the former is important in the collection and study of folklore, the utility of the later as the means for analysis, criticism, comparison and deduction cannot be discounted. It would be perhaps better if the anthropological side of the picture were not neglected.

We welcome *Janpad*. It is a journal devoted to the voiceless millions of this country, to the unrecorded, unknown, unsung elements of India's cultural life. May it be a true mouthpiece of the folks—the sons of the soil, the torch bearers of our culture who have preserved the rich elements of Indian culture in spite of calumny, ignominy and hatred heaped upon them by their undeserving brethren !

V. K.

Crime Prevention, annual subscription Rs. 3, sh. 7½, or \$1.25.

We welcome the publication of *Crime Prevention* (Quarterly) from Lucknow, official organ of the Crime Prevention Committee, Lucknow.

We regret to note that societies of this type in India have not been of much use in the past, as they have tried to dabble in all sorts of activities not necessarily connected with their special field of work. We hope the trend will not be allowed to continue, and

that such societies, now established, will make it their aim to restrict the scope of their activities to strictly scientific social work. We wish the Crime Prevention Committee and the *Crime Prevention* could be a pointer in this respect. We would very much like to stress upon the publishers and editors of the *Crime Prevention* the necessity of a scientific outlook combined with a zeal for social welfare, and thus be useful to the offenders and their custodians.

K. S. M.

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